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or Mynnir, spoken in the extreme north, and there may be others. A great desideratum for linguistic purposes is a more adequate method of recording sounds, and especially differences of tone, than that adopted for the standard speech, which though sufficient for practical purposes, does not accurately represent either the quantity or the quality of the vowels, and leaves something to be desired as regards the consonants (especially those only faintly sounded or suppressed). These things, no doubt, will come in time. The immense advance which has been made in education by the Khasis during the last half-century has enabled some among them to appreciate the interesting field for exploration and study which their own country and people afford; and there is reason to hope that with European guidance the work of record will progress by the agency of indigenous students.

It remains to summarize briefly the principal distinctive features of this vigorous and sturdy race, who have preserved their independence and their ancestral institutions through many centuries in the face of the attractions offered by the alien forms of culture around them.

In the first place, their social organization presents one of the most perfect examples still surviving of matriarchal institutions, carried out with a logic and thoroughness which, to those accustomed to regard the status and authority of the father as the foundation of society, are exceedingly remarkable. Not only is the mother the head and source, and only bond of union, of the family: in the most primitive part of the hills, the Synteng country, she is the only owner of real property, and through her alone is inheritance transmitted. The father has no kinship with his children, who belong to their mother's clan; what he earns goes

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to his own matriarchal stock, and at his death his bones are deposited in the cromlech of his mother's kin. In Jowai he neither lives nor eats in his wife's house, but visits it only after dark (p. 76). In the veneration of ancestors, which is the foundation of the tribal piety, the primal ancestress (*Ka Iawbei*) and her brother are the only persons regarded. The flat memorial stones set up to perpetuate the memory of the dead are called after the woman who represents the clan (*mâw kyrhei*, p. 150), and the standing stones ranged behind them are dedicated to the male kinsmen on the mother's side.

In harmony with this scheme of ancestor worship, the other spirits to whom propitiation is offered are mainly female, though here male personages also figure (pp. 106—109). The powers of sickness and death are all female, and these are those most frequently worshipped (p. 107). The two protectors of the household are goddesses (p. 112), though with them is also revered the first father of the clan, *U Thâwlang*.

Priestesses assist at all sacrifices, and the male officiants are only their deputies (p. 121); in one important state, Khyrim, the High Priestess and actual head of the State is a woman, who combines in her person sacerdotal and regal functions (p. 70).

The Khasi language, so far as known, is the only member of the Mon-Khmêr family which possesses a grammatical gender, distinguishing all nouns as masculine and feminine; and here also the feminine seems immensely preponderate (p. 206). The pronouns of the second (*nei, phâ*) and third person (*ê, lê*) have separate forms for the sexes in the singular, but in the plural only one is used (*phi, lî*), and this is the plural form of the feminine singular.

It may perhaps be ascribed to the pre-eminence

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There are also syntactical agreements. We may take it as finally proved by Dr. Grierson and Professor Kuhn that the Mon-Khmér, Palaung, Wa, and Khasi languages are closely connected. In the section of the Monograph which deals with language some striking similarities between the languages of these tribes will be pointed out. We have not so far been able to discover social customs common to the Palaungs and the Khasis; this is probably due to the conversion of the Palaungs to Buddhism, the change in the religion of the people having possibly caused the abandonment of the primitive customs of the tribe. In a few years' time, if the progressive rate of conversions of Khasis to Christianity continues, probably the greater number of the Khasi social customs will have disappeared and others will have taken their place, so that it cannot be argued that because no manifest social customs can now be found common to the Khasis and the Palaungs, there is no connection between these two tribes. The strong linguistic affinity between these two peoples and the wild *Was* of Burma points to an intimate connection between all these in the past. As knowledge of the habits of the wild *Was* improves, it is quite possible that social customs of this tribe may be found to be held in common with the Khasis. With regard to social affinities it will be interesting to note the Palaung folk-tale of the origin of their Sawbwa, which is reproduced in Sir George Scott's Upper Burma Gazetteer. The Sawbwa, it is related, is descended from the Naga Princess Thusandi who lived in the *Nat* tank on the Mongyh hills and who laid three eggs, from one of which was born the ancestor of the Palaung Sawbwa. Here we see how the Palaung regards the egg, and it is noteworthy that the Khasis lay great stress on its potency in divination for the purposes of religious sacrifices, and that at death it is placed on the stomach of the deceased and is after-wards broken at the funeral pyre. Amongst some of the tribes of the Malay Archipelago also the *Gaji-Guru* or medicine-man "can see from the yolk of an egg, broken whilst sacramentally counting from one to seven, from what illness a man is suffering and what has caused it." Here we have an almost exactly parallel case to the Khasi custom of egg-breaking.

In the Palaung folk-tale above referred to the importance of

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Shillong is excellent, the flavor being quite as good as that of English honey. Under "Miscellaneous Customs connected with Death" will be found a reference to the statement that the dead bodies of Siems used to be embalmed in honey. The existence of the custom is generally denied by Khasis, but its former prevalence is probable, as several trustworthy authors have quoted it.

HOUSES.

The houses of the people are cleaner than might be supposed after taking into consideration the dirtiness of the clothes and persons of those who inhabit them. They are as a rule substantial thatched cottages with plank or stone walls, and raised on a plinth some 2 to 3 ft. from the ground. The only window is a small opening on one side of the house, which admits but a dim light into the smoke-begrimed interior. The houses are so low that it is impossible for a person of ordinary stature to stand erect within. The fire is always burning on an earthen or stone hearth in the centre. There is no chimney, the smoke finding its exit as best it can. The firewood is placed to dry on a swinging frame above the hearth. In the porch are stacked fuel and odds and ends. The pigs and calves are generally kept in little houses just outside the main building. The Khasi house is oval-shaped, and is divided into three rooms, a porch, a centre room, and a retiring-room.

In olden days the Khasis considered nails unclean, or taboo, and only used a certain kind of timber for the timber which surrounds the hearth; but they are not so particular now-a-days. In Mawkhar, Cherrapunji, and other large villages, the walls of houses are generally of stone. In Cherrapunji the houses are frequently large, but the largest house I have seen in the hills is that of the Dolui of Sohiong in the Jaintia Hills, which measures 74 ft. in length. The house of the Siem Primrem at Smit in the Khasi Hills is another large one, being 61 ft. long by 30 ft. broad. In front of the Khasi house is a little open-fronted shed on two sides, but open towards the village street. The

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played with a little wooden key held in the hand. *Ka sarjyngod* is an instrument much the same as the last, but is played with a bow like a violin. *Ka sarsyrthing* is a kind of guitar with one string, played with the finger.

Ka tiangsuri is a wooden pipe, which is played like a flageolet. *Ka lynskiw*, or *shikwriw*, are cymbals made of bell metal; *ka shiwiti*, or *ka shingwiang*, is a kind of flute made of bamboo. This instrument is played at cremation ceremonies, and when the bones and ashes of a clan are collected and placed in the family tomb, or *mawbah*. This flute is not played on ordinary occasions. In the folk-lore portion of the Monograph will be found a tale regarding it. There are other kinds of flutes which are played on ordinary occasions. The Wars of the twenty-five villages in the Khyrim State make a sort of harp out of reed, which is called *ka 'sing diny phiang*. The Khasis also play a Jews' harp (*ka mieng*), which is made of bamboo.

AGRICULTURE.

The Khasis are industrious cultivators, although they are behindhand in some of their methods of cultivation, (e.g. their failure to adopt the use of the plough in the greater portion of the district); they are thoroughly aware of the uses of manure. Their system of turning the soil, allowing them to dry, then burning them, and raking the ashes over the soil, is much in advance of any system of natural manuring to be seen elsewhere in the Province. The Khasis use the following agricultural implements:—A large hoe (*mukkie kol*), an axe for felling trees (*u sdie*), a large do for felling trees (*ka wait lyngpam*), two kinds of bill-hooks (*ka wait pnat* and *ka wait khmat*), a sickle (*ka sidoh*), a plough in parts of the Jaintia Hills (*ka lyngkor*), also a harrow (*ka sah mar*). In dealing with agriculture, the lands of the Khasi and Jaintia Hills may be divided into the following classes:—(*a*) Forest land, (*b*) wet paddy land called *kili or pynthor*, (*c*) high grass land or *ka ri kiew*, or *ka ri phlang*, (*d*) homestead land (*ka 'dew kyiad*). Forest lands are cleared by the process known as *jhooming*, the trees being felled early in the winter and allowed to lie till January or February,

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dition that she does not remarry; the idea being that so long as the house remains in the widow's keeping, the spirit of her husband is still with her. On this account many wives who revere their husband's memories, and who do not contemplate remarriage, purposely keep the house for a long time. If a widow marries, even after the customary taboo period of one year, whilst her deceased husband's house are still in her keeping, she is generally looked down upon. Her children in such a case perform the ceremony of handing over the bones of their father to his clan in a building specially erected for the purpose. The widow cannot enter therein, or even go near it, whilst the ceremony is proceeding, no matter whether the *jing sang*, or the price for removing the taboo after a husband's death, has been paid to the husband's clan or not. There is no evidence to show that polyandry ever existed amongst the Khasis. Unlike the Thibetans, the Khasi women seem to have restricted themselves always with one husband, at any rate with one at a time. Certainly at the present day they are monandrists. Polygamy does not exist amongst the Khasis; such a practice would naturally not be in vogue amongst a people who observe the matriarchate. There are instances, however, of men having wives other than those they have regularly married, and in the War country children by such wives enjoy rights to their father's acquired property equally with the children by the legally married wife. As the clans are strictly exogamous, a Khasi cannot take a wife from his own clan; to do this would entail the most disastrous religious, as well as social consequences. For to marry within the clan is the greatest sin a Khasi can commit, and would cause excommunication by his kinsfolk and the refusal of funeral ceremonies at death, and his bones would not be allowed a resting place in the sepulchre of the clan. To give a list of all the Khasi exogamous clans would perhaps serve no useful purpose, but I have prepared from information kindly furnished me by the Siems of Khyrim and Cherrapunji, a list of the clans in those States which will be found in Appendices A and B. These will suffice as examples. It will be seen from the Cherra list that the different divisions of the Diengdoh clan, viz. Lois, Diengdoh-bah, Diengdoh-kylla, are prohibited from intermarriage; this is due to those branches of the clan being

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INHERITANCE.

The Khasi and Synteng laws of inheritance are practically the same, although in some of the dolooships in the Jaintia Hills there are some slight differences. The War law of inheritance differs greatly from that of the Khasis, and the customs of the Bhois or Mikirs, who inhabit the Bhoi dolooship of the Jaintia Hills, are totally different both from those of the Khasis, thereby supplying another link in the chain of evidence in support of the conclusion that the Bhois, or, more correctly speaking, the Mikirs, are of Indo origin, and not Khasi or Mon-Annam. The Lyngams follow the Khasi law of inheritance. It will be convenient to describe the Khasi law first, and then to pass on to the special customs in vogue in the different dolooships in the Jaintia Hills, and, finally, to describe the War, Bhoi and Lyngam customs.

The Khasi saying is, "*ka long jaid na ka kyntiei*" (from the woman sprang the clan). The Khasis, when reckoning descent, count from the mother only; they speak of a family of brothers and sisters, who are the great grandchildren of one great grandmother, as *shi kyrk*, which, being literally translated, is one womb, i.e. the issue of one womb. The case is entirely. If he is a brother, a *kur*, a brother being taken to mean an uterine brother, or a cousin-german, he will be lost to the family or clan directly he marries. If he be a husband, he is looked upon entirely as a *stong kha*, a begetter. In some of the War villages a newly married man is spoken of by the bride's family as, "*u khun ki briew*," some one else's son. It is, perhaps, somewhat of a paradox under the circumstances that wives should address their husbands as "*kynmad*," or lord. There is, however, no gainsaying the fact that the husband, at least in theory, is a stranger in his wife's home, and it is certain that he can take no part in the rites and ceremonies of his wife's family, and that his other after death can find no place within the wife's family tomb, except, in certain cases, amongst the Syntengs. Further, the communal religion amongst Khasis, especially that of the home, is in the hands of the women. It is therefore, perhaps not to be wondered at, considering the important status assigned to women by the Khasis, that women

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The adoption of a female obviates the family dying out (*iap duk*), which to the Khasi is a very serious matter, inasmuch as there will then be no one qualified to place the bones of its members within the family tomb (*ka ia thep shiang mawbah*), and to perform the requisite funeral ceremonies. Amongst the Khasis no particular ceremonies are performed at the time of adoption; but some of the Syntengs observe a religious ceremony which consists largely of a feast to the clans-folk, at which liquor, rice, dried fish, and ginger are partaken of. Before the feast commences, each clansman is provided with a small gourd (*u khnap*) filled with liquor, a little of the latter is then thrown on the ground from the gourd, and the following words are uttered:—

"Oh, God! oh, Lord! oh, ruling king Binkuram, now the *pyrsoy thep* ceremony is about to be performed, let the ceremony be propitious, and let males and females (*of* the clan) increase in numbers, so that the clan may become great, and respected, and that intelligent male members may spring up." No such ceremony is, however, observed, it is understood, in the Nartiang and Bolieng chiefships.

In the case of a family being *iap duk* (extinct), the family property, according to Khasi custom, passes to the Siem. Therefore it is to the interest of the members of families to adopt a female, when such necessity arises. As there is no religious ceremony which is compulsory to the Khasis on the occasion of an adoption, perhaps we are almost justified in concluding that in former times the adoption custom did not exist, more especially as the Khasis possess a special word, *iap duk*, for describing a family the females of which have all died out; and it is admittedly the custom for the Siems to succeed to the property of such a family. The Syntengs custom of *'rep thep* may have been borrowed from the Hindus, when the Rajas of Jaintia became converts to that religion.

TENURE OF LAND AND LAWS REGARDING LAND.

Land in the Khasi Hills proper, i.e. land in the high plateau, is held somewhat differently from land in the Jaintia Hills and

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SECTION IV.

RELIGION.

GENERAL CHARACTER OF POPULAR BELIEFS.

The Khasis have a vague belief in a God the Creator, *U Blei Nongthaw*, although this deity, owing, no doubt, to the influences of the matriarchate, is frequently given the attributes of the feminine gender, cf., *Ka lei Synshar*. The Khasis cannot, however, be said to worship the Supreme God, although it is true that they sometimes invoke him when sacrificing and in times of trouble. The religion of the Khasis may be described as animism or spirit-worship, or rather, the propitiation of spirits both good and evil on certain occasions, principally in times of trouble. The propitiation of these spirits is carried out either by priests (*lyngdohs*), or by old men well versed in the arts of necromancy, and as the *lyngdoh* or wise man deals with good as well as evil spirits, and, as often as not, with the good spirits of ancestors, the propitiation of these spirits may be said to partake of the nature of Shamanism. A very prominent feature of the Khasi beliefs is the propitiation of ancestors; but this will be described separately. There is a vague belief amongst the Khasi of a future state. It is believed that the spirits of the dead, whose funeral ceremonies have been duly performed, go to the house or garden of God, where there are groves of betel-nut trees; hence the expression for the departed, *ube kum kwai ha ding u blei* (he who is eating betel-nut in God's house), the idea of supreme happiness to the Khasi being to eat betel-nut uninterruptedly. The spirits of those whose funeral ceremonies have not been duly performed are believed to take the forms of animals, birds, or

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insects, and to roam on this earth: but this idea of transmigration of souls has been probably borrowed from the Hindus. Bivar writes that although the ideas of a Godhead are not clearly grasped, yet a supreme creator is acknowledged, and that the following is the tradition relating to the creation of man. "God in the beginning having created man, placed him on the earth, but on returning to look at him, found he had been destroyed by the evil spirit. This happened a second time, whereupon the Deity created first a dog, then a man; and the dog, who kept watch prevented the devil from destroying the man, and the work of the Deity was thus preserved." The Khasis, apparently, do not believe in punishment after death, at least, there is no idea of hell, although the spirits of those who have died under the ban of *sang* remain uneasy, being obliged to wander about the earth in different forms, as noted above. The spirits worshipped by the Khasis are many in number, those of the Syntengs being specially numerous. The particular spirit to be propitiated is ascertained by egg-breaking. The offering acceptable to the spirit is similarly ascertained and is then made. If the particular sacrifice does not produce the result desired, a fowl is sacrificed: the entrails being then examined, an augury is drawn, and the sacrifice begins afresh. As the process of egg-breaking is believed to be peculiar* to the Khasis amongst the Assam hill tribes, a separate description of it is given in the Appendix. It should be remarked that the Khasis never symbolize their gods by means of images, their worship being offered to the spirit only. The following are some of the principal spirits worshipped by the Khasis and Syntengs, omitting the spirits of deceased ancestors such as *Ka Iawbi*, *u Thawlang*, and *u Suidnia*, which will be described under the heading of ancestor-worship.

U Li sulok—the god of the State, who is propitiated yearly by the sacrifice of a goat and a cock.

U Li wahap—the god of water, used for drinking and cooking purposes. This god is similarly propitiated once a year, so that the water supply may remain pure.

* Sir Charles Lyall has pointed out that the Mikirs possess this custom; it is probably borrowed from the Khasis.

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sary, as in times of trouble. These offerings take the shape of articles of food which are theoretically partaken of by the shades of the deceased ancestors, the idea of making such offerings being very similar to that of the Hindus when they offer the "*pinda*," or cake, to nine generations of ancestors, i.e. to propitiate the shades of the departed, and to obtain their help thereby. U Hormu Bai Diengdoh writes that, "the real religious demand" amongst the Khasis is the *ai kem*, or giving of food to the spirits of deceased ancestors, in order that the latter may aid the living members of the clan with their help, and bless them. To honour dead ancestors is the duty of every Khasi, and he who wilfully neglects this duty, it is believed, will neither receive their help, nor be defended from the influence of the numerous spirits of evil in which the Khasis believe. Amongst the Syntengs, a few days after depositing the bones in the ancestral tomb, the ceremony of feeding the spirits of the dead is performed. At this ceremony there are some families which give two pigs for each person of the family who is dead, and there are some who give one. The pigs are taken to the *iing-sang*, or puja house of the clan. Presumably, pigs are usually offered to the shades only of those members of the family whose remains have been recently deposited in the clan cromlech. In the chapter dealing with memorial stones the reader will notice how many of them are erected to the memory of deceased ancestors, and how they bear the names of such ancestors, e.g. *Ka Iawbei* (the first grandmother), *U Suidnia*, or *U kni rangbah* (the first maternal uncle). It was the custom in former days to make offerings of food upon the flat table-stones to the spirits of the deceased ancestors, and this is still the case in places in the interior of the district. This practice, however, may be said to be largely dying out, it being now commonly the custom to make the offerings in the house, either annually, or at times when it is thought necessary to invoke the aid of the departed. Such acts of devotion may well be said to partake of the nature of worship. As has been the case in other countries, and amongst other people, it is possible that the Khasi gods of to-day are merely the spirits of glorified deceased ancestors transfigured, as has happened with some of the gods of the

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Shinto Pantheon of Japan. It may be interesting to note that the ancient Shinto cult of Japan possesses some features in common with the ancestor-worship of the Khasis. Take the funeral ceremonies. With both people we find the dead laid out in the house, food placed before the corpse, and the funeral ceremonies taking place, accompanied by music and dancing. Mr. Lafcadio Hearn, in an interesting book on Japan, writes "that in ancient times the Japanese performed ceremonies at regular intervals at the tombs of deceased members of the family, and food and drink were then served to the spirits;" this is exactly what the Khasis used to do at their cenotaphs. This, apparently, was the practice in Japan before the "spirit tablet" had been introduced from China, when the worship of the ancestors was transferred from the tomb to the house. We have an exactly similar instance of evolution amongst the Khasis of the present day, i.e. the transfer of the ancestor cult from the flat table-stones erected in honour of deceased ancestors to the house. Last, but not least, is the idea common to both people, that no family or clan can prosper which does not duly perform the worship of deceased ancestors; this, as Hearn puts it, is "the fundamental idea underlying every persistent ancestor-worship, i.e. that the welfare of the living depends upon the welfare of the dead." The "Khasi Mynta," in an interesting article, notes some further points of resemblance between the methods of ancestor-worship adopted by the two people. The following instances may be quoted. Amongst the Japanese the spirits of those who fall in battle are said to help their fellow-warriors who are still fighting. The "Khasi Mynta" quotes a similar belief as having existed amongst the Khasis in former days. The remains of Japanese warriors who die in battle are said to be reverently taken to the warrior's home at the first opportunity. The Khasis do likewise, the clothing in default of the ashes of Khasi transport coolies, who were employed on military expeditions on the North-Eastern Frontier, having been carried home by the survivors to present to the dead man's relations, who then performed the ceremonies prescribed by custom for those who have died violent or unnatural deaths. Of all deceased ancestors the Khasis revere *Ka Iawbei* the most, the word *Iawbei* being made up of

being in a position to help his descendant in times of trouble. The same thought underlies the extreme reverence with which *Ka Iawbei* is regarded. Thus we see a striking point of resemblance between the Khasi ancestor-worship and the ancient Shinto cult of Japan, as described by Mr. Lafcadio Hearn. *U Suid-Nio*, or *u Kni Blophah*, the first maternal uncle, i.e. the elder brother of *Ka Iawbei*, is also much revered. It will also be noticed under the heading of memorial stones that the great central upright monolith of the *mawbynna*, or memorial stones, is erected in his honour. The influence of the *kni*, or mother's elder brother, in the Khasi family is very great, for it is he who is the manager on behalf of the mother, his position in the Khasi family being very similar to that of the *karta* in the Hindu joint family. It is on this account that he is so much revered, and is honoured with a stone which is larger than the other up-right memorial stones after death. It will be seen in the article dealing with "the disposal of the dead," that at Cherra, on the occasion of the burial of the ashes in the cinerarium of the clan, a part of the attendant ceremonies consists of the preparation of two effigies called *Ka Paron* and *U Tyngkop*, intended to represent *Ka Iawbei* (the first mother) and *U Suid-Nio* (the first maternal uncle). The Wars of Nongjri have a custom peculiar to themselves. They erect small thatched houses in their compounds, which they call *ring lawiid*. When they worship their ancestors they deposit offerings of food in these houses, the idea being that the ancestors will feed on the offerings. These Wars do not erect memorial stones, nor do they collect the ashes of the clan in a common sepulchre; they deposit the ashes in circular cineraria, each family, or *ring*, possessing one. It should further be noted with reference to the Khasi custom of *ai kaw*, or giving food to the spirits of deceased ancestors, that Dr. Frazer, in his "Golden Bough," has mentioned numerous instances of firstfruits being offered to the spirits of deceased ancestors by the tribes inhabiting the Malay Archipelago. (See pages 462-463 of the "Golden Bough.") Some other points of similarity in customs have already been noticed between the Khasis and certain Malay tribes.

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of a Garo marriage. The Lyngams, unlike the Garos, do not observe which way the backs of the fowls turn when they are thrown on the ground after being sacrificed. The Lyngams, like the Khasis, take auguries from the entrails of the fowls and the pig. After these ceremonies are over, the Lyngam pair are allowed to cohabit. The cost of an ordinary Lyngam marriage is from Rs. 30 to Rs. 40. The marriage system in vogue among the Lyngams may be described as a mixture of the Khasi and Garo customs. As has already been stated, the Lyngams are a mongrel breed of Khasis and Garos.

CEREMONIES ATTENDING DEATH.

The death customs of the Khasis are not only very elaborate, but possess a significance of their own, it is, therefore, necessary to describe them in detail; they are as follows:—

A member of the family bends down towards the ear of the apparently deceased person and calls him or her by name three times, to make sure that death has occurred. If no answer comes, the family laments, for it is then concluded that the person is really dead. The body is then bathed in warm water from three earthen pots and is reverently laid on a mat (*jeptang*), where it is dressed in white cloth, a peculiar feature of the dressing being that the waist-cloth and turban are folded from left to right, and not from right to left, as in the case of the living. An egg called *u'long kpuh* is placed on the stomach of the deceased, and nine fried grains of rice *kadon*, or Indian corn, are tied round the head with a string. The rich place ear-rings in the ears and other jewellery on the body of the deceased, it being necessary that this jewellery should be specially made for the occasion, and they deck the corpse with valuable cloths. A cock, *u'kor kpuh* (literally the cock that scratches the way), is sacrificed, the idea being that a cock will scratch a path for the spirit to the next world. A sacrifice of a bull, or of a cow in case the deceased is a woman, (*u* or *ka mooi pynsaw*,) follows. Portions of the left leg of the fowl and the lower part of the jaw of the bull or cow are kept, to be placed afterwards in the *mawshiong*, or bone,

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overgrown. A small basket (*ka shong*) is hung up over the head of the corpse, the basket containing pieces (*kyhiet*) of the sacrificed animals. A dish containing eatables, and betel-nut, and a jar of water are placed near the head of the corpse by way of offering refreshment to the spirit of the departed. The food is given each morning and evening that the corpse remains in the house; this is called *ai ja saiat ja slap*. Each night the corpse remains in the house guns are fired, drums are beaten and flutes (*shiwiet*) are played. It is a noteworthy custom that the body is not removed in the house for an even number of nights, the usual time being three nights. If it is intended to burn the body on a masonry pyre (*jingkheny*), a bull (a castrated bull) is sacrificed. If the body is placed in a coffin (*ka shyngaid*), a pig named *u'siang shyngaid* is sacrificed, and if it is intended to adorn the pyre with flags, a fowl called *u'kor lasit* is sacrificed. On the day of the funeral procession pigs are sacrificed by the relatives and friends of the deceased; those who cannot afford pigs bring liquor (*ka'iad shog*), a small portion of which they pour on the funeral pyre. The coffin is laid on a bamboo bier (*ka kreng*), money being placed close to the corpse, so that the spirit of the deceased may possess the wherewithal to buy food on its journey. Cotton, or, in the case of the rich, silk cloths are tied cross-ways over the bier, if the deceased is a male, and in the form of a parallelogram, if it is a female. Before lifting the bier a handful of rice and water from a jar are thrown outside, and a goat (*u'long sait kyrsiâ*) is sacrificed. These are purificatory ceremonies. The funeral procession then forms up and slowly passes along the way to the plaintive music of flutes (*shawiet*) and the beating of drums. At intervals, in the case of the rich, salutes from guns are fired. Copper coins are also scattered along the route. On nearing the pyre the dead body is exposed to view, and the pieces of flesh of the sacrificial animals, which are with the corpse, are thrown away. They make ready three baked leaves (*ki kpu*), an egg, the lower jaw-bones of the animals which have been sacrificed, the left leg of the fowl (*u'kor kwad kynti*), a jar of water, eatables in a dish, and a bow and three arrows. A goat is then sacrificed, *u'long mawkyiat*. The corpse is laid on the pyre, inside the coffin, if one is used, with the head to the west, and the feet to the east. Logs of

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[illegible] and are placed around the body, and the egg, "a long *kyrk*," is broken, not over the stomach of the deceased, as has been sometimes supposed, but by being thrown on the pyre in the direction of the feet of the corpse. Fire is applied to the pyre, first by the [illegible] or members of the clan, and then by the children, if any, of the deceased. Another fowl, "a lean *pudut*," is sacrificed, its blood being caused to flow three times, and across the corpse lengthwise. The bird is then broken in pieces, the cloths having been removed from it previously. The intestines and the jaw bones of the sacrificed animals are then placed at the head of the pyre. After the fowl (a lean *pudut*) has been sacrificed, the three arrows already mentioned are shot from the bow, one to the north, another to the south, and the third to the east. These arrows are called *ki'-sem tyrsiew*. It is, perhaps, significant that the arrows which are shot at death correspond in number with those which are used at the time of the birth ceremony. When the fire has blazed up another goat, "a long *thatia*," is sacrificed. In some cases all the clothes of the deceased are burnt with the body, in others the clothes are merely held over the fire and then taken away, after which they can be used; this is only in the case of poor persons. Before leaving the burning place the relatives and friends of the deceased place betel-nuts on the pyre and bid farewell to the deceased, saying "*Khublei khie-khot nga kyrpa ha ka Blei-ka*" (pronounce, go and eat betel-nut in the house of god). When the body has been thoroughly burnt, the fire is extinguished with water, and the unconsumed bones are collected by the relatives in three trips. The collectors are not allowed to turn back and pick up a bone which has been forgotten in any one of these trips. The bones thus collected are carefully wrapped in a piece of white cloth by the female relatives, and on the number of the family fifteen or the ground some purchased rice from a leaf, at the same time adjuring the spirit of the deceased not to trouble the [illegible], or the family, or the funeral ceremonies have been duly performed. The party then sets out to the [illegible] ceremony, as mourning. In front walks one who strews along the line of route leaves of the tree known by the Khasis as *diengthi* (the berries of which are used for fishing with), and grains of rice, all the way from the pyre to the cairn.

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and throw up the seeds or coweries into the air, and when they fall to the ground they say, "*to ello noh ka nyio ne ioin ne kynthaw noh ka phi*," some one we will collect you (the idea being that the seeds represent the bones of the deceased). Having collected the seeds, they place them on a bier and perform the service for the dead just in the same way as if a real dead body were to hand. If possible, a portion of the dead person's clothes should be burnt with the seeds in the bier, and it is with this view that the coats or cloths of Khasi sepoys, who die when employed as porters on military expeditions at a distance from their homes, are brought back by their friends to give to the relatives. If a person dies of cholera, small-pox, or other such infectious or contagious disease, the body is buried, but to dug up again and burnt with all the customary rites when fear of infection or contagion is over. In parts of the district upright stones called *mau-sadui* are erected along the line of route when the remains of a person who has met with an accidental death are brought home. This is stated to be the case in the Khasi-Jaintia Hills.

MISCELLANEOUS CUSTOMS IN CONNECTION WITH DEATH.

In Nongjri, a large village in the War Country, the dead body is placed on a bier near the door of the house, a turban being tied about the head, the face being left bare and turned towards the door. In some of the Shella villages a second cremation is performed, in which a bamboo frame-work represents the corpse. This second cremation takes place when the body has been disposed of without the requisite ceremonies. The bones and ashes of the dead in Shella are in some cases kept in a cavity hollowed out of a post erected for the purpose. The bones and ashes find a temporary resting-place here, but are afterwards removed to a cromlech.

At Nartiang, in the Jaintia Hills, the head of the corpse is shaved, but a tuft of hair in the middle of the head is left; this is called (*u'nioh kordei*), the great grandmother's lock. At Nartiang betel-nut, which has been chewed by one of the mourners, is put into the mouth of the corpse, also cooked rice. There is

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a similar custom prevalent amongst the Khyrwangs. The Nongtongs, in the Jaintia Hills, keep dead bodies sometimes as long as a month, until the *pâlor* or commercial dance has been performed. Hence they are called *Nongtong*, or "stinkers." Amongst the Lyngams the dead body is kept for sometimes three or four months, or up to the time when a bull can be procured for a feast to the villagers. This feast is an essential, and, cattle being scarce in the Lyngam country, there is often great delay in disposing of the body. Lyngam villages at such a time are best avoided. The Lyngams of Nongkhlaw bury the ordinary bones of the deceased within the village, and in front of the house occupied by the deceased when alive, the bones being placed in a hole in the ground, over which is laid a stone, a bamboo mat being nailed over the stone. A bamboo fence three or four feet high is erected round the grave. Other Lyngams bury the unclaimed bones and ashes in a guard in the jungle near the burning-place. On their way home, the members of the clan of the deceased who have come from other villages to witness the funeral obsequies, put up a stone on the path in honour of the deceased, a turban being tied round the top of the stone. The Garos or Dkas, who live at the foot of the hills on the Kamrup border, and are called by the Assamese *Mara* (spear-men) erect memorial stones in honour of the deceased, the lower jaw-bones of sacrificial animals and other articles being hung on the stones. The stones are also overlaid in cloths, and turbans are tied round the tops. The death customs of the Lyngams, and, indeed, other customs also, are partly Khasi and partly Garo, it being difficult to say that the Lyngams are more Khasi than Garo, or more Garo than Khasi in the respect: their language, however, has been found by Dr. Grierson to be a corruption of Khasi. In Nongstoin, Mawlih, and Mariow villages, the inhabitants of which profess to be Khasis, the bones and ashes of the deceased are not collected and placed in sepulchres, as at Cherrapunji. At Mariow and Nongstoin a large wooden coffin is used, painted white, with ornamentations on the outside, and standing on four legs. This coffin is not burnt on the funeral pyre. In the family of the chiefs of Cherra, the body of a deceased Siem is subjected to the following process:—It is wrapped in a cloth

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and placed in a hollowed-out trunk of a tree, *ka-shyngrid*, there being a small hole with a plug at the bottom of this receptacle. Spirit is then poured into the *shyngrid* until the whole body is immersed, the liquor being allowed to stand for three days. After the body has been thus steeped, the liquor is allowed to run out, and the body is washed with warm water, after which it is allowed to dry for a day. Then a quantity of lime-juice is poured in, the latter being obtained from the fresh fruit of the lime (*u soh jaw*). The body is then exposed to a process of pickling, which continues until the whole is thoroughly dry and becomes like that of a mummy. It is then placed in a coffin, which is kept in the house of the Siem family until it is time to perform the funeral obsequies. These ceremonies entail a very large amount of expense, and it sometimes happens that they cannot be completed for some years after the death of a Siem. The body of a deceased Siem according to the Cherra custom should be burnt by his successor; otherwise the latter is not Siem according to the Khasi religion. The last Siem of Cherra, U Hajon Manik, did not perform the funeral obsequies of his predecessor U Ram Singh, and it is stated that many of his subjects did not regard him as Siem, according to the Khasi religion, in consequence. There are at the present time the corpses of two Siems of Cherra which have been preserved in the manner described above, awaiting cremation. The first Siem, U Ram Singh, died as far back as 1875, and the second, U Hajon Manik, died in 1901.

Sir Joseph Hooker and other authorities have stated that the bodies of deceased Siems of Cherra used to be embalmed in honey, and an amusing story is told regarding the necessity of exercising caution in purchasing honey from Cherra (honey being plentiful in this neighbourhood), except in the comb, for fear of honey which has been used for embalming purposes being passed off on the unwary purchaser. But the members of the Siem family and the old residents deny that honey is used for this purpose nowadays, possibly in the interests of the trade. It is, however, not unlikely that honey was so utilised in days gone by, as it is a well-known agent for embalming. The bodies of priests in Burmah are said to be embalmed in honey, *vide* Yule's "Embassy to Ava."

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THE DISPOSAL OF THE DEAD.

• 269 The collection of the unclaimed bones and ashes of the deceased members of the clan and their removal to the *mawbah*, or great receptacle of the clan, is without doubt the most important religious ceremony that the Khasis perform. That this ceremony is now but seldom celebrated, is due partly to the difficulty that exists in obtaining general agreement amongst the members of the clan, and partly to the considerable expense it entails. The information I have obtained regarding the ceremony, although differing to some extent in detail from that recorded by the late U Jorkon Roy, agrees with the latter's account as regards the main facts. The information may now be set down as follows. By way of premise it may be stated that the bones and ashes of the deceased are kept after cremation in small stone cairns, or *mawbiang*. From these small cairns the bones and ashes are removed to larger bone repositories called *mawphew*, each branch of a clan possessing a repository of its own. The ceremony attending the removal of the bones and ashes from the small cairns to the larger repository, or *mawphew*, and the ceremony attached to the removal of these remains from the *mawphew* to the sepulchre of the clan are practically the same, except that when the bones are removed to the *mawphew*, no female dancing takes place. First of all, the members of the various branches of the clan collect the bones from the different subsidiary repositories, when a ceremony called "*khot ia u ker u kap*," which it is not necessary to describe here, is performed. The bones of the deceased males and females are kept separately, and preparations are made to bring them to the sepulchre of the clan. Before, however, anything further can be done, it must be ascertained that the members of the clan are at peace with one another and no differences exist. If all differences are settled, a sacrificer offers up a prayer that the sins of the clan-folk may be forgiven, and then breaks eggs and sacrifices a cock to ascertain which will be a propitious day for depositing the bones in the sepulchre. A lucky day having been thus ascertained, the bones and ashes are brought to the *iing sang*, or clan puja-house,

the house of males and females being kept in separate bundles wrapped in white cloth, two women of the clan reverently carrying them in their arms, holding the bundles of bones to their breasts. One female carries the bones of the males and the other those of the females. In front of these women walks an old man who scatters along the way leaves of the *diengphlit* tree and grains of rice, and when it is necessary to cross any stream or river, he ties a thread from one side of the bank to the other, this is for the spirit of the departed to cross the water. Sometimes *u'mon tubah*, a kind of long grass, is used instead of thread for the above purpose. On arrival at the clan *puja*-house, the bones of the males are laid on one bed and those of the females on another, the beds being bedecked with rich hangings. A cock, *u'kiar kradhyntí* (lit.: "the cock which scratches the way"), is sacrificed, this sacrifice being considered by the Khasis to be of peculiar significance. A pig, a cock, and a bull are then sacrificed, and portions of the slain are offered to the spirits of the deceased. These offerings are known by the name of *u'shem*, and are placed in a basket which is hung up in the house, together with the left thigh of the fowl and the lower jaw-bone of the bullock. A dance is performed that night, first in the house by two women, one belonging to the clan and the other an outsider, and afterwards in a specially prepared place outside the house called "*lyngwey*." The *shawiit*, or flute, which is played at funerals is sounded, drums are beaten, and bombs are exploded. This dancing lasts from one to nine days, the limit being always an uneven number of days. At Cherra two effigies called *Ka Pawan* and *U Tyngdep* are prepared and dressed up; the former is intended to represent *Ka Iawbei*, the first ancestress, and the other *U Sniáwbei*, the first maternal uncle of the clan. These effigies are held in the hands of the dancers. In the meantime two lines of upright stones consisting of three each, with a table-stone in front of each line, have been set up. These are called *maw'ïpit* or *maw'lynti*, and are intended to serve as resting-places for the spirits of the dead on their way to the tomb of the clan. These stones are generally not more than three feet in height, and must not be confounded with the larger stones or *mawbynna*. On the night before it is proposed to deposit the

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house, a ceremony called "*Sah Synpoo*" is performed, which consists of driving out the devils from the house, so that they may not injure with the power of the spirits of the departed whilst they rest in the house, and on their journey to the tomb. All the men after they have performed this ceremony are given a drink of rice-beer known as *lad sumphah*. Another cock is sacrificed, and a small bamboo ladder of three rungs is prepared for the use of the spirits when climbing into the tomb. Rice is then thrown outside the door. The next morning they perform further ceremonies, which need not be detailed here, and let loose a bull whose horns have been cased in silver. They dig two shallow tanks called *umkoi*, into which is poured water supposed to possess the virtue of purifying the house of any deceased persons who have died violent or unnatural deaths, or at places far away from their homes, where it was not possible to perform their funeral ceremonies according to custom. These actual graves are also erected, called *mow umkoi*. A bamboo with a white flag, and a plantain tree are set up; to the bamboo are attached three bamboo rings (*kpawah*), which are supposed to act as entrances to the spirits of the departed who have not received the benefits of a proper funeral ceremony. It may be explained that this ring of bamboo or cane is the form of summons used by the Khasi chiefs to their subjects when they wish to call them before them. Then a cock, *u'lor umkoi*, is sacrificed as a vicarious victim to bear the sins of the departed. When the procession reaches the *mawkjet* or *mawlyndi* (the upright stones which have been erected), a goat called *u'long mawlyndi* is sacrificed. Then a bamboo is fixed to the outer one of the three upright stones, to which is attached the lower jaw-bone of one of the cattle sacrificed in the *puje*-house; this is called a *mawi mawlyndi*. A special ceremony called *ka-lynglo-pongsei* is then performed for those of the clan who have died childless. We now come to the actual ceremony of placing the bones in the tomb of the clan. Having arrived at the tomb, the bones are washed three times in a dish (this is a Cherra custom). In Mawlai, the bones are exposed to the heat of a fire kindled on a small *jingthang*, or burning-platform. The stone door of the *siewrieum* is then opened, and the bones of the female are placed in an earthen pot inside the tomb

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close to the wall which is furthest away from the door, the bones of the males being deposited in a pot inside the tomb nearest the door. Some clans keep the pot containing the bones of the males on the right, and the vessel containing those of the females on the left hand. Then offerings of food and libations of liquor are offered to the ancestors on a stone in front of the tomb. The males then perform a ceremonial dance with swords and shields three times, and the door of the sepulchre is closed, a flag being fixed to the tomb. All the clansfolk then depart except three men. One of these sacrifices a cock (see reading) in front of the tomb; a second sits behind the sacrificer, holding three firebrands, and a third sits behind the tomb. The man with the firebrands shakes them about, and then moves like a cock three times. The man behind the tomb listens attentively for any buried noise within it, the superstition being that if the ceremonies detailed above have not been properly performed, the whole tomb will quake. If the three watchers are satisfied that there is no commotion within the tomb, then all is well, and they return and report the result to the clanspeople. This ceremony is called *tandieng*, or the fire test. Next morning the woman who is the head of the *kup-sang*, or pujā-house, distributes to all those who have taken part in these sacrifices the hinder portions of the sacrificial animals. She then likewise cuts up and distributes the sacrificial animals. The latter are not permitted by custom to go to work until after three days from the time of the ceremony; the third day being called *ka sngi kait ia*. The ceremony described above is a symbolical one. The massive stone sepulchre is regarded as a symbol of a secure place of rest for the departed spirits. If the spirits of the dead are not, however, appeased by the due performance of the ceremonies attending the burial of the remains in the clan *niewriem*, it is believed that they roam about and haunt their relatives on earth, and plague them with various misfortunes. It may be interesting to note here, that Mr. Moberly, the Superintendent of Ethnography in Bengal, reports that the ashes of deceased Hos, after being sprinkled with water by means of peepul branches, are collected, dried, and placed in a new earthen pot, and kept in the house until the day of burial, which may take place, as with

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the Khasis long afterwards. The bones are buried in the village under a large slab of stone (cf. the Khasi stone sarcophagus) and a monolith is erected outside the village to commemorate the deceased.

STONE MEMORIAL STONES.

Probably one of the first objects which strikes the eye of a visitor to the Khasi Hills is the very large number of monoliths, tablestones, and crombechs that are to be met with almost everywhere in that country. Vide Dalton, and other writers have incidentally referred to them, but, so far as is known at present, no attempt has been made to explain in any detail what is the peculiar significance of these objects to the Khasis. These stones are rightly styled memorial stones; *kpomoor*, literally "to mark with a stone," is the word in the Khasi language for "to remember." The memorial stone, in the ordinary sense of the word, is a memorial to the dead; but we have such stones of places in these hills as *Mawslai*, the salt stone (the eating of salt off the blade of a sword being one of the Khasi forms of oath), *Mawsmai*, the oath stone, *Mawpdang*, the granny stone, and others. To commemorate with a stone an important event has been a constant custom amongst many people in many places, and the erection of grave-stones, to mark the spot where the remains of the dead are buried, is an almost universal practice amongst the Western nations, as indeed amongst some of the Eastern also. But the Khasi monoliths are no mere grave-stones, in the sense of marking the place where the remains of the dead lie, than some of the memorials of Westminster Abbey and other town; the Khasi stones are cenotaphs, the remains of the dead being carefully preserved in stone sepulchres, which are often some distance apart from the memorial stones. It is proposed to treat this subject under the following heading:—

(1) A general description of the memorial stones in the Khasi Hills, showing that they are very similar in shape to monoliths, table-stones, or crombechs in other parts of the world and of India.

(2) A comparison between Khasi memorial stones and those of the Ho-Mundas, the stones near Belgaum, those of

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the Nilgiri, the monoliths at Willong in the Manipur Hills, and the Dimapur monoliths.

(2) The meaning of the stones.

(3) The method of their erection.

With regard to the first heading, the stones may be divided into (a) menhirs, or vertical stones; (b) table-stones, or dolmens, and (c) stone cromlechs, or cairns, which serve the purpose of sarcoria. Taking the different stones in order, the menhirs are large upright stones varying in height from 2 or 3 ft. to 12 or 14 ft., but in exceptional instances rising to a more considerable elevation, the great monolith at Nartiang, in the Jaintia Hills, being 27 ft. high, and 2½ ft. thick. A photograph of this stone has been included. These menhirs are erected all in one line which nearly always consists of an uneven number of stones. Three is the commonest number of menhirs, but five together are frequently to be found, and there are some instances of seven stones; at Laitkor nine stones are standing, an illustration of which will be found in this book. The stones are of hewn gneiss granite, or sandstone, to be met with in many places in these hills. They are rough hewn, and generally taper gradually to their tops, which are sometimes neatly rounded off. The tallest stone is usually in the middle, and is occasionally ornamented with a small stone, through the middle of which a hole has been drilled so that it may fit on the top of the other. At Nongkrem there is a centre stone with a regularly carved top, evidently intended to represent the head of a man. At Umstew, some two miles from Cherrapunji by the cart road, stood two rows of fine monoliths, each row five in number, and standing on either side of the old bridle road. All of these stones except one were thrown down by the earthquake shock of June, 1897. The centre stone, or *mawbei*, of one of these rows was surmounted by a carved stone covering shaped like a hat, but having a rim with indented edges, the intention being evidently to represent a crown. This stone crown was riveted to the top of the large centre stone. All the stones, including the *mawkynthei*, or dolmen, have been very neatly hewn. They appear to be of granite. Stones with top coverings or carved heads are however rare.

In front of the line of monlits is a large flat table-stone resting on stone supports, the top of the uppermost plane being some 2 to 2½ ft. from the ground; this flat stone is sometimes as much as a foot or more thick. The largest table-stones are to be seen at Nartiang in the Jaintia Hills and Laitlyngkot in the Khasi Hills. The Laitlyngkot stone measures 28½ by 15½ ft., and that at Nartiang 16½ by 14½ ft. The Laitlyngkot stone is 1 ft. 8 in. thick. Sometimes two table-stones are found parallel to one another. The table-stones are always placed towards the centre of the group, generally in front of the great central monlit. These groups of stones are usually situated alongside roads, or close to well-known lines of route, where they readily attract the attention of passers-by. They do not necessarily face in any particular direction, but are to be found fronting all points of the compass. There is nothing therefore to show that they were erected so as to face the direction of the sun-rise, or of any particular planets. We will now pass on to the numerous stone cromlechs which are to be found, frequently in proximity to the monlits and table-stones. These stone cromlechs contain the bones of the dead, and the monlits and table-stones are intimately connected with them, inasmuch as memorial stones to deceased ancestors are erected when the ceremony of depositing bones in the cromlechs has been completed. The cromlechs are built of blocks of stone, sometimes on stone platforms, and sometimes resting on the ground. They are frequently of considerable size. The cromlech is opened by removing one of the heavy stone slabs in front. There are no windows such as are to be seen in some of the illustrations of dolmens or cromlechs in France and Circassia in Waring's book of "Stone Monuments, Tumuli, and Ornaments of Remote Ages," probably because the Khasi idea was to confine the spirits and not allow them to escape from the tomb and haunt the living. The cromlechs are generally square or oblong, but are sometimes circular in shape also. Let us now compare the Khasi monlits with some to be found in other parts of the world. In Lord Avebury's "Prehistoric Times," Fergusson's work, and Waring's collection of plates of stone monuments there are numerous illustrations of monlits and dolmens

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to be found in other parts of the world, which may be said to resemble those of the Khasis in appearance; but this is by no means a matter for surprise, for, given like conditions, amongst primitive peoples, totally unconnected with one another as regards race, and living in countries far remote from one another, the results, i.e. the erection of stones as memorials of important persons, or events, are probably the same all the world over. Waring in his book gives an illustration of several lines of stone monuments with two table-stones, either in front or in rear according to the position of the photographer or draftsman in taking the picture, which would appear to be very similar to the lines of menhirs we find in the Khasi Hills. In plate XLII., fig. 6, of Waring's book, are the lines of stones to which I refer. They may be said to be almost exactly similar to the lines of Khasi memorial stones, except that the stones depicted by Waring have circles or ovals painted on them, which are said to signify that certain sacrifices of animals have been performed. Now the Khasis perform such sacrifices, but they do not mark their performance thus on the stones. Ferguson on page 447 of his "Rude Stone Monuments" apparently refers to these stones, which are near Belgaum in the Bombay Presidency, and he is of opinion that "they were dedicated or vowed to the spirits of deceased ancestors"; further it is stated that these stones are always in uneven numbers, a striking point of similarity to the Khasi stones. We know, for a fact, that the Khasi memorial stones were dedicated to the same objects as those of the Belgaum stones, i.e. to the worship of ancestors; so that we have not only similarity in appearance, in conformation, and invariable unevenness of number, but identity of purpose, if Ferguson's conclusion is correct. It is, however, a far cry from Shillong to Belgaum, and it may, perhaps, be thought more reasonable if we look for stones nearer at hand. Bradley Birt in his interesting book on Chota Nagpur has given a photograph of certain Ho memorial stones, which would appear to resemble greatly the Khasi menhirs, and if his photograph is carefully examined, it will be seen that there are in rear of the stones what would seem to be stone cairns, very similar in appearance to the Khasi cistvaens. The funeral ceremonies of the Hos as described by Bradley

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211 764 Birt, viz. the cremation of the body, the collection of the ashes, their consignment to a grave, and the offering of food to the spirit of the deceased, are similar to those of the Khasis. Although not wishing to lay too much stress on what may be merely a coincidence, I think that the above similarity in death customs is well worth considering with regard to the view, based on linguistic affinity, that the Khasis and the Ho-Mundas were originally descended from a common stock, i.e. the Mon-Khmêr or Mon-Anam family, as has been postulated by Logan.

But there are other tribes in Assam which erect memorial stones, e.g. the Mikirs and certain Naga tribes. The Mikirs erect memorial stones in a line, the taller stone being sometimes in the centre, as in the case of the Khasi memorial stones. Such stones are set up by the Mikirs only in memory of important personages, such as *manandars* or leading *goonburas* (village headmen). Besides the standing stones (*long-chong*), a flat stone (*long-pok*) is also erected in honour of the deceased. I understand that the Mikir stones, like the Khâsi, are mere cenotaphs, the ashes of deceased Mikirs being left at the burning places which are generally by the sides of rivers, and the memorial stones not being necessarily anywhere near the burning grounds. Unlike the Khasis, the Mikirs do not collect and carefully keep the bones in stone cairns. Before erecting memorial stones, they dig a small tank; cf. the Khasi custom of digging similar tanks (*um-doh*), before erecting memorial stones (*mawsiaw*), to those of the clan who have died unnatural deaths. As with the Khasis, feasts and entertainments are given when the stones of the Mikirs are erected; but they need not necessarily consist of uneven numbers, it appears. It is possible that the Mikirs may have obtained the custom of erecting memorial stones from their near neighbours, the Khasis.

Then there is the interesting collection of stones at Willong in the Manipur Naga Hills, for a description of which I am indebted to the kindness of Colonel Maxwell, the late Political Agent and Superintendent of the State. It is said that about 300 or 400 years ago these stones were erected by the rich men of the village as memorials (probably to deceased ancestors). It is the custom of the Willong village that any person who

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wishes to erect such a stone should, with the members of his family, abstain from food; but liquor and ginger are allowed to them. Having chosen what he thinks is a suitable stone, the Naga cuts off a flake of it, returns home, and sleeps on it with a view to dreaming of the stone. If his dreams are favourable, he brings it in, otherwise not. From the day of the selection of the stone, until it is brought in and erected, he must fast. Women are taboo to him for the space of one year from the date of its erection. The custom of erecting memorial stones is not therefore peculiar to the Khasis amongst the hill tribes in Assam. An incidental reference should, I think, be made to the interesting carved monoliths at Dimapur, regarding the meaning of which there has been so much doubt. These Dimapur stones are remarkably similar in shape to the carved wooden *kima* posts of the Garos, another hill tribe speaking a language which is undoubtedly connected with the great Boro group of languages in North Eastern India. The Garo *kima* posts, like the Khasi stones, are erected to commemorate deceased ancestors. Some of the other Naga tribes, besides the Willong Nagas, are in the habit of erecting what are called *genna* stones, a description of which will, we hope, be given in a subsequent Naga monograph. The object of the erection of such stones is certainly to show reverence to the memories of deceased ancestors amongst the Khasis, and Garos, and not improbably among the Nagas also.

It is only with the very greatest difficulty that it has been possible to obtain any intelligible information regarding the Khasi monoliths. Whether through feelings of delicacy in revealing the secrets of their religious system to a foreigner, or through ignorance or apathy (there being but few Khasis nowadays who observe the ancient ritual), it has been no easy task to extract information from people about these stones. As far as my information goes at present, I am inclined to classify the stones as follows:—

(a) *Mawlynti*, or *mawkjat*, the stones which are erected to serve as seats for the spirits of departed clansfolk on their way to the tomb of the clan, i.e. when their remains are carried by their relations to the clan cromlech (see the section entitled "The Disposal of the Dead").

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764 211 (*b*) *Mawbynna*, or *maunam*, which are stones erected to commemorate a parent or some other near relation.

[766] (*c*) *Maw-umkoi*, which are put up to mark the position of tanks or *umkoi*, the water of which is supposed to cleanse the ashes and bones of those who have died unnatural deaths.

[485] (*d*) *Maw-shongthait*, or flat table-stones, often accompanied by vertical stones, which are placed in the market-places and by the side of roads to serve as seats for weary travellers. Taking the above main divisions seriatim, *mawlynti*, or *mawkjat*, may be described as follows. These generally consist of three upright stones, the tallest being in the centre, and a flat table-stone being placed in front. There are, however, some clans which erect more than three upright stones, as *mawlynti*, or *mawkjat*. As already stated, the clansfolk used to erect these stones, *mawlynti* (the stone of the way), or *mawkjat* (the stone of the leg), at each place at which they halted for the night on their way to deposit the bones of their deceased maternal relations in the clan sepulchre, or *mawbah*. The stones are called *mawkjat*, or stones of the leg, because it is supposed that the spirits of the departed sit and rest their limbs on the flat table-stones. The upright stones are not as a rule more than 3 or 4 ft. high, and are not massive like the great mawbynna, or memorial stones. They are to be found in great numbers all along the roads or paths which lead to the clan cromlechs. These stones, unlike the *mawbynna*, have no names.

769 211 (*b*) *Mawbynna*, or *maunam*, are erected to commemorate deceased parents or deceased ancestors, and consist of 3, 5, 7, 9, or even, in an exceptional case, 11, upright stones with flat table-stones in front. The upright stones are called *maw-shynrang*, or male stones, and the flat table-stones *maw-kyathei*, or female stones. Turning to the plate of the Laitkor stones, it will be observed that there are nine upright stones, and one large flat table-stone in front. Counting from right to left, stone No. 5 is called *u maw kni*, or the maternal uncle's stone, and the stones to the right and left of it, *ki maw pyrsa ki para*, i.e. the stones of the maternal brothers and nephews. The table-stone is called *ka Iawbei tynrai*, or *ka Iawbei tymmen*, literally the grandmother of the root, or the old grandmother, in contradistinction to *ka*

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plate. The hair is worn tied in a knot behind the head, but with a long tail hanging down the back. Rich silk cloths are worn by the girls, who present the appearance of being, if anything, over-clothed, or, as Yule aptly puts it, of "perfect parallelograms." They wear a profusion of gold and coral bead necklaces, silver and gold chains, bracelets, ear-rings of gold and any other jewellery they can lay hands on. Not only is the whole of the family jewellery requisitioned by the fair *débutante* (it is only the unmarried girls who dance), but she borrows from her friends. The men dance round the outside of the circle, waving fly-flaps and prancing (often nowadays wearing huge boots) with ungainly strides. The music necessary for the dance consists of *tangmuri* (pipes), drums, and cymbals. This is *ka shad kynthei*, or the dance of the women. Then there is *ka shad mastieh*, or the dance of the men, who are gaily dressed, wearing plumes of black and white cock's feathers (*u thwiyah*) and hold swords and shields. After gyrating for some time, two men at a time rapidly approach one another and clash their swords together in mock combat. They then retire, and, after again revolving for a period, repeat the process; then other couples follow and take their place. This goes on until the dancers get tired or are told to stop.

The above description may be taken as applicable to all the Khasi dances. Dancing forms part of the ceremony of placing the ashes in the sepulchre of the clan. Dancing also forms a part of certain ceremonies performed at markets for the prosperity of the State and for the good of trade.

When I was at Mawsynram, at the time of the appointment of a Siem, I witnessed a very pretty dance called *ka shad lyamoh*, performed by men who held the leafy branches of trees in their hands. This is most effective. Then followed a dance of some forty young girls, very well dressed, covered with the usual gold and coral beads and silver chains, and wearing the silver crown, or *pansngiat*. The young women danced with great spirit, and with an absence of all shyness, but still with the greatest decorum. Many of the women, spectators as well as dancers, were observed to be without the usual *tap mah khlih*, or head-cloth, the absence of which is always a sign amongst the Khasi women of merry-making. There were

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GENNA.

784 The word *genna* is one in common use amongst the Naga tribes. It seems to be a matter of doubt whether the word belongs to any of the numerous languages or dialects spoken by these tribes; but for our purposes it may be taken to mean *taboo*. The Khasi word *sang*, which implies an interdiction either religious or social from doing any particular thing, might have been employed; but as the word *genna* is so commonly used when speaking of taboos amongst the hill tribes of this province, I have thought fit to employ it here. The word *genna*, or taboo, may be held to include the Khasi *sang*. Taboos amongst the Khasis, Wárs and Lynngams may be divided into
784 two sections; (*a*) general, and (*b*) special. Instances of general
609 taboo have not been found amongst the Khasis, but the follow-
688 ing taboo called *Ka sang kla* amongst the Wár villages of Sohlsar and Nongjri is peculiar, and therefore worthy of description. Its chief peculiarity is that during the time the *sang kla* continues, the inhabitants of these two villages are not allowed to associate with foreigners. This *genna* takes place twice a year, in the months of June and November, and lasts for a month each time. During the *genna* foreigners are not allowed to stay the night in these two villages, and the villagers must not sleep the night outside their villages. If they do not return home for the night, they are subjected to a fine. There is a prohibition against eating, smoking, or chewing betel-nut with foreigners
784 during the period. The above is the only instance of general
609 taboo that I have been able to find amongst the Wárs, but in
582 the Lynngam villages there is a taboo on all outsiders at the time of the village pujas. Such a taboo amongst the Lynngams is not to be wondered at, as they have probably imbibed the notion from their Garo mothers, intermarriages between Lynngams and Garos being common. The Garos, like other Thibeto-Burmans, have numerous taboos. There are numerous
582 instances of special taboos among the Khasis. *Kaba*
784 *shong sang*, or marrying within the *kur* or clan, is the
783 most important taboo of all, and is regarded as the most
● 764 serious offence a Khasi can commit. It admits of no expiation, and the bones and ashes of the offender cannot be placed in the family tomb.

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or difference. It is owing to these three different names being used for the same people that there has been so much confusion about Lynngams previously; e.g. at one census they were named *Lynngam*, at another they received the appellation of Garo, and at a third enumeration they were called Khasis. In Section I. the habitat of the Lynngams has been roughly defined. It is impossible to define the Lynngam country exactly, because these people are continually shifting their village sites owing to the exigencies of *jhum* cultivation, which has been described in Section II. Some of the Lynngams preserve a tradition that they originally came from the Kamrup plains. It is interesting that a people, like the Garos in so many respects, should have the same idea as the Garos as to the hills on the south bank of the Brahmaputra not always having been their abode. The Garo legend is that they dwelt for some years in the Goalpara and Kamrup plains after they descended from Thibet, and before they moved to the Garo Hills; and there is unmistakable evidence of their occupation of both districts in the shape of certain Garo villages on both banks of the Brahmaputra for some little distance up the river. If, as I suspect, the Lynngams are an offshoot of the Garos, it is, perhaps, possible that they entered the Khasi Hills much in the same way as the Garos entered the hill district to which they have given their name. The Lynngams are much darker than the Khasis, and possess the Thibeto-Burman type of feature often to a marked degree. It is not extraordinary that they should have adopted some of the Khasi customs, for the Khasis, being the stronger people, would in course of time be bound to influence them in this respect. That the Lynngams observe the matriarchate and erect (some clans) memorial stones is not peculiar, because the Garos, like the Khasis, are also a matriarchal people (to a limited degree), and the custom of erecting memorial stones is not confined to the Khasis, for other hill tribes in Assam observe the practice, e.g. certain Naga tribes and the Mikirs; and the Garos themselves put up carved posts, called *kima*, in honour of the departed. Although there is not much intermarriage between the Khasis and the Lynngams nowadays, perhaps in days gone by there was a mixture of blood, the result being the hybrid race we are now consider-

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582 marry any one belonging to your own *kur*, or clan. Unlike the
614 Khasis, however, a Lynngam can marry two sisters at a time.
595 The Lynngam marriages are arranged by *kaiangs*, or go-betweens,
584 much in the same way as Khasi marriages; but the ritual
582 observed is less elaborate, and shows a mixture of Khasi and Garo customs (see Section III.). The Lynngams intermarry
583 with the Garos. It appears that sometimes the parents of girls exact bride-money, and marriages by capture have been heard of. Both of these customs are more characteristic of the Bodo
847 tribes of the plains than of the Khasis. There are no special birth
782 customs, as with the Khasis, except that when the umbilical cord
553 falls a fowl is sacrificed, and the child is brought outside the house. Children are named without any special ceremony.
764 The death customs of the Lynngams have been described in Section III. A peculiar characteristic is the keeping of the dead body in the house for days, sometimes even for several months, before it is burnt. The putrefying corpse inside the house seems to cause these people no inconvenience, for whilst it remains there, they eat, carry on their ordinary avocations, and sleep there, regardless of what would be
771 considered by others an intolerable nuisance. The religion of these people consists of a mixture of ancestor-worship and the propitiation of the spirits of fell and fall, which are, most of them, believed to be of evil influence, as is the case with other savage
776 races. As with the people of Nongstoin, the primæval
782 ancestress, "*ka Iaw bei*," is worshipped for the welfare of the clan, a sow being sacrificed to her, with a gourd of rice-beer, and leaves of the oak, or *dieng-sning* tree. The leaves of the oak are afterwards hung up inside the house, together with the jaw-bone of the pig. Sacrifices are offered to a forest demon, *U Bang-jang* (a god who brings illness), by the roadside; also to *Ka Miang Bylli U Majymma*, the god of cultivation, at seed time, on the path to the forest clearing where the seed is sown. Models of paddy store-houses, baskets and agricultural implements are made, sand being used to indicate the grain. These are placed by the roadside, the skulls of the sacrificial animals and the feathers of fowls being hung up on bamboos about the place
793 where the sacrifice has been performed. There are no priests or
796 *lyngdohs*, the fathers of the hamlet performing the various cere-
monies.

763
[782] person. Whether death has occurred is determined by calling his name. If no further sign of life is observed, howling and wailing begin to announce the mourning. Tears are extremely rare.

764 The dead person is bathed and washed (pynsum-pynsleh), wrapped in his clothes and reverently placed on a bamboo mat. One is particularly careful with the limbs; for the hands and feet are stretched out completely (phyneit ki kjat ki kti) and placed straight (pynthiah beit). To indicate mourning one does not wind the dead man's turban from right to left as usual but the other way around. In the territory of Lamin one puts betel nuts, which are wrapped in pepper leaves, between the turban and the forehead. These betel nuts are placed in a row so that they look like a crown or wreath. Every morning and every evening, as long as the body is in the house, one places cooked rice and dried fish by the head of the dead man. One calls this giving ai ka ja miet ja step (morning and evening meal).

764
782 How long the dead man stays in the hut varies with each sib. Many are cremated on the day after death, whereas others several days later, but always the body stays an uneven number of days in the hut. A betel nut with a pepper leaf and lime is placed with the food as well as a bamboo beaker with water. Finally one puts the "stomach egg" (ka leng kpoh) on the stomach of the dead man (in the area of the stomach). This is the start of the actual sacrifice.

The sacrificer takes a chicken, strews rice on its head, holds it ready for killing, and says while doing this:

782
764 [430] To sngew mo ba long u krad lynti u krad syngkieng, te ba poi hi ka sngi ka ia te wei ngam lap ia ka khein ka bishar te la pom ka tyrut ka smer la pom ka bneng ka khyndew, te kynrad sngew ho, ba men leit da ba suk da ba beit ha kpoh la ka kmie ka kiaw u nie u ma suidnia ka laubei mo?

Hear, o thou road scraper, thou path scratcher, since the day and hour have come and I can no longer get along, am with sacrifice and justice, so have the Tyrut and the Smer struck me and heaven and earth have struck me and so my lord, stop then, that thou goest in peace, right and righteousness of the stomach (in the family) in peace and harmony with the uncle and the cousins. Judge thyself, o goddess Jaubei, is it no so?

Now even though otherwise only good chickens may be used for sacrifices, in this case it does not make any difference whether the rooster (u iar krad lynti) is a fine example or not. The next best is simply taken.

If the dead man is cremated "poorly," i.e. if the relatives are not in a position to pay greater costs, only this rooster and a handful of rice is sacrificed.

If the dead man is cremated "richly," i.e. if the relatives are in a position to pay for the usual ceremonies along with numerous sacrifices, a pig is sacrificed and each of the masculine relatives must give a handful of rice which is also sacrificed immediately.

Various sacrifices are offered, according to whether the dead man is to be cremated on a base built of stone as is the case of the very

764
782 rich, or in a kind of coffin (shyngoid). In the first case a steer (ox) is sacrificed, in the other case a pig (u 'niang shyngoid). The horns of the steer (u masi pyllait) are painted gold or silver. Today one does this only with gold or silver paper. Then the animal is let loose after it has been strewn with rice and sprinkled with water ('iad-um). Anybody who captures it can keep it or kill it. As soon as the animal is let loose, one calls it masi-tamrong. If one wants to set up on the cremation area bamboo poles with white cloth pieces on them as if they were flags, which is only done for the very well-to-do, a rooster (u 'iar kait) is sacrificed.

[461] Since no work may be done on the day of cremation, all the preparations must be completed, such as fetching wood from the forest ('law kyndang), erecting the funeral pyre, arranging for the necessary sacrificial animals and other sacrificial gifts, etc.

4. The Cremation (ka jingthang).

The Khasi burn their dead. At the crematory ceremony one can distinguish various classes or kinds, either according to the wood [431] which is used or according to the catafalque (scaffolding for the body or structure above the dead person) which is erected.

The methods of cremation according to the differences in the wood are:

1. The cremation, for which only uncut wood is used, that is, wood as it is found without any kind of preparation. This type of cremation is made only by the very poor (uba duk eh) who have no more relatives. There is no sacrifice made at this cremation

●764 (khlem dykhot).
782 2. Cremation in which the wood used is cut with a knife (da wait). Here a handful of rice is taken from the relatives (ka pynkham ka pynsoh) and a sacrifice offered, "the piece and the sour thing."

3. Cremation in which the wood used is cut clean as boards (ka lyntang). In this class the drum (ka ksing) and the kettledrum (ka dah) are beaten, guns (ka suloi) and the pipe (ka man, i.e., a cannon) are fired, sacrifices are offered, "the piece and the sour thing (u kykhot u lamjew)," an ox (u masi) and a pig (u sniang) are sacrificed. Usually the sword dance (shad wait) is also performed.

764 The method of cremation according to the differences in structure are:

1. Thang syrkhait is that type of cremation in which no kind of catafalque (structure) is used. In this case the dead person is placed on a kind of bamboo lattice work.

2. Thang lyngkhason is that form of cremation for which a catafalque is erected. The dead person is put in a kind of coffin made of young slender trees, bamboo, and boards. This coffin is covered with red cloth with decorations of silver edgings. Over the body, which one does not see, a structure is erected of flowering bushes and figures. One likes to make a peacock of wood to which paper is attached. (28) The whole thing is

28. This ceremony might have originated

•764 in the valley and been brought in from there.

richly decorated with paper flowers. The structure is over the head of the deceased. Shell money (sbai) is distributed to the people at this cremation.

[436]

3. Thang shan is that method of cremation, in which the expense goes still further. In addition to the above mentioned structure over the body, a baldachin of four high bamboo poles is also erected over the funeral pyre, which is kept up after the cremation. The baldachin is decorated with colored cloth or paper. Only the very eminent people and the group mother (Stammutter) are cremated in this fashion.

The wood for the cremations is always taken from a holy forest ('law kyndang). But dry wood is also always brought along from the hut, since the green wood fetched from the 'law kyndang would not burn immediately. The fire is also not lighted at the place of cremation, but one takes a firebrand from the hut.

[432] Not until all the relatives have arrived and all the preparations for the cremation are completed — for no work may be done on the day of cremation -- is the dead man brought to the place of cremation. He is placed, fully clothed, on a bamboo bier (ka krong). At the four ends of the bier, often also at the middle of the long sides, so that there are six of them, bamboo sticks are raised upright and a white cloth is fastened around the whole or crosswise -- depending on whether the body is that of a man or a woman. Weapons,

764 a shield, bow, arrow, and knife (wait) are placed beside the man and ornaments beside a woman. All this, however, is not burned, but is taken away before the fire is lighted, with the exception of the woolen or silk cloth that is attached to the upper ends of the bamboo poles. If the corpse has received money and food, a sacrifice is offered, usually a goat. Poorer people pour a little brandy on the ground.

Now the funeral procession moves towards the place of cremation. This place is designated in each village and is usually located on the slopes near oak forests.(29) As pre-

29. Cf. Table II, Picture 3: Place of Cremation of the Khasi with a stone substructure.

viously during the night, when the dead man lay in the hut, guns are also shot off now, and if the people have wealth, paper bombs are set off. On the way copper coins are distributed to poor people. The tom-tom resounds, the eternal, monotonous beat on the large drum and the melancholy piping of the flutes (sharati). With great wailing from the mourners, in which the women relatives of the dead person excel, they finally reach the place of cremation, which is not sought out until late in the afternoon.

764 782 First a goat (u'lang mawkjat) is sacrificed here. Then the body is lifted up on the catafalque, which has already been prepared, with his head towards the west and his feet towards the east. A rooster is now sacrificed, which they call 'iar syngkhong. If the deceases is well-to-do, a he-goat is also slaughtered,

764 782 which is called u 'lang sait ksuid or "the he-goat which washes off the devil." The meaning of this is: the he-goat is similar to the "scapegoat" which takes the sins of the deceased upon himself.

Among the poor (that is among those who only use uncut wood as well as those who use wood cut with the ka wait) there is no funeral.

Now the closest relatives start the fire and after these the children of the deceased, if there are any present, apply fire. The cloth on the upper end of the bamboo poles flame brightly and is burned up in no time. The few clothes of the deceased are also soon in flames and then the actual burning of the body begins.

If the pile of wood catches fire, a rooster u 'iar padat is sacrificed immediately. This rooster is swung three times over the funeral pyre just as one swings incense and its blood is smeared three times on the pyre. Then the "stomach egg" (leng kpoh) is broken at the head end of the funeral pyre. Then three ar- [823] rows ('nam tympem) [433] are thrown by hand as far as one can in three directions. One to the east, one to the south, and the third to [775] the north. But never to the west. Because according to the belief of the Khasi the west leads to the unending, thither go the souls of the dead, there lies eternity. (30)

[626] 30. When the Khasi would like to have somebody go far away and they curse him, they speak as follows: to leit sha ban sep ka sngi shaba mih u bnai, i.e., go away where the sun sets and the moon rises!

(Go away where the pepper grows.)

ooo (Go away where the pepper grows.)

●764 Meanwhile others are completely occupied with the burning of the body. Soon the intestines pour out into the fire, whereupon they begin to sizzle. A horrible smell comes from the crackling intestines. The steam that is developing in the skull from the fire causes a violent explosion in the skull which sounds like a gunshot. After the pile of wood has burned down and the yellowish green smoke has gone, you still see in the bluish fire the outlines of the black, steaming and cooking corpse. Now the men, who are already quite drunk from rice brandy, poke around in the fire with bamboo sticks and pour liquor and oil on it, which causes the flames to blaze up again. I saw in Lamin at a cremation that the heart was left as the last thing, which was then burned by itself with great sadness on the [273] part of the cremators. The objectionable scene of cremation could not occur without an [782] excess taking of alchohol. As a conclusion a goat is sacrificed (u 'lang dholia) on the spot and the relatives take their departure as they place betel nuts on the burned up funeral pyre with these words: khublei khie leit bam kwai ha iing u blei (god guard thee, go and eat betel nuts in the house of god!

In some places it is customary before the cremation for a man to get drunk with liquor. He then represents the devil and performs all sorts of tricks.

764 When the corpse is burned, one then col-
782 lects the remains of the bones which did not quite get burned up. (31) These are washed

31. Cf. Table III, Picture 1: Collecting the Remains and the Bones

764 782 that are not burned up and the Ashes (among the Khasi).

and wrapped in a small piece of cloth and then put in an urn (jar). While a woman is doing this, a man strews rice on the ground and entreats the spirit of the deceased not to disturb his relatives who have remained behind in the world, since everything was done correctly at the cremation. When this entreaty is finished, the urn with the remains of the bones is placed under the tombstone (maw shying). The remains of poor people are also put under this stone but not in an urn. The sacrificial rice (ka japha) is also placed by the urn as food for the deceased (cf. the next section).

765 782 Early the next day they count up together the expenditures they have had. Speeches are made by the u kni u kpa (the maternal uncle) to the assembled children and grandchildren. This u kni u kpa [434] has been the priest and judge of the sib up until now. Now all business stops for three days. But on the third day they gamble (draw lots - bud pylleng) with two eggs to see who will be the leader of the sib of the deceased in the future, so that one will know to whom one should turn when sacrifices must be offered or quarrels are to be smoothed out. Thereby the present u kni u kpa speaks in relation to the deceased:

Hei ap ia ka nia ka jutang ynda ia lum ia kynshew ia u kur u para u khun ka meinah ka meisan yn sa tai ia ka khein ka bi shar yn sa long ka

So hearken unto the words of the promise! After the relatives and brothers and sisters of the mothers-in-law and aunts are gathered, we will sift

765 ai bam ka ai sa ia me
782 ka kynrong ka hyntaw
ka pynkhiah ka pynnang,
dih sa ka kiad sa ka
um mo!

our words and our sacrifices and out judgments and then will be: to care for thee and to nourish thee and to carry over thy bones and to care for thee in sickness and to make thee healthy. So we wish to drink the liquor and the water, is it no so! (32)

[273]

32. The water is a fermented rice water, that is variously called rice beer. The last sentence has the sense of an affirmation and of an oath.

Hei sngew ryngkat
ma phi ka blei ka
laubei ka nonglum
nongkynshew shi khrum
ka nar mo!

So hear then, o goddess, thou Jaubei, thou who has gathered us here, one and all (33) the whole sib

33. Shi khrum - actually the hollow place, the place under the house.

and stone and iron, is it not so!

764
782 As there are various customs for sacrifices, so are the ceremonies for cremation various. It is reported (34) that on the day of

34. Gurdon, The Khasi, p. 133.

cremation pigs are slaughtered by the relatives of the deceased. Those, who cannot afford to

764
782 sacrifice pigs, bring liquor, some of which they pour out on the funeral pyre. The coffin is raised onto a bamboo bier, and some money is placed next to the body so that the spirit of the deceased can buy food on the journey. Cotton or (in the case of rich people) silk cloths are wound around the coffin, crosswise if the deceased is a man, in the form of a square if the deceased is a woman. Before the bier is [783] raised up, one throws a handful of rice and pours a little water from a jug in front of the door and sacrifices a goat. These are purification ceremonies. The funeral procession is now arranged and slowly wends its way accompanied by a great deal of music. For rich people guns are shot off in between times. Copper coins are also strewn along the way. As the funeral pyre is approached, the corpse is placed on display and the peices of meat of the sacrificed animals which lay beside the body are thrown away. Then one arranges three loaves of baked bread, an egg, the lower jawbones of the animals which were sacrificed, the left [435] foot of the rooster (u 'iar krad lynti), a jug of water, food in a dish, and three arrows. A goat is now sacrificed. The body of the deceased is placed in the coffin, if one is used, and then lifted up on the pile of wood, with the head towards the west and the feet towards the east. Pieces of wood are now placed around the corpse, and the egg ("stomach egg") is broken, not as is often supposed over the stomach of the deceased but rather it is thrown on the pile of wood in the direction of the feet. The fire is now lighted by the kur or member of the clan and then by the children, if there are any. Another rooster (u 'iar padat) is sacrificed, the blood

764 of which is smeared three times on the pile
782 of wood. After the clothes are removed, the bier is broken into pieces. The edibles and the jawbones are now placed by the head of the deceased. After the sacrifice of the rooster the three arrows are shot off from a bow, one towards the north, another towards the south, and one towards the east. One calls these arrows the 'nam tympem. It should perhaps be mentioned that the number of arrows, which are shot off during the cremation, corresponds with the number of arrows which are used during the name giving. As soon as the fire is burning, another goat is sacrificed (lang dholia). In some cases all the clothes are burned with the body; in other cases the clothes are only held over the fire and then put aside for further use (which is the case only among the poor). Before the relatives and friends leave the place of cremation, they place betel nuts on the pile of wood and say farewell to the deceased with these words: "Khublei, go and eat betel nuts in the house of god" (according to Gurdon).

5. Burial of the Bones

764 There is a threefold burial of the bones, i.e., of the remains of the bones not burned up and of the ashes. But these burials are not varied for the wealthy, the well-to-do, or the poor, as in the case of cremation, but all the bones of the dead are buried three times in different places. The burial rite for the first or second burial is essentially the same. The rite of the third is considerably more ceremonial.

The first burial occurs immediately after the cremation near the place of cremation in

● 764 the maw shying, the place of temporary keeping.

The second burial occurs later, when the bones are transferred from the maw shying into the maw phew. Maw phew are places for keeping the ashes of members of a narrower family circle. The bones of the male relatives are kept here as well as the bones of the female relatives, but separately from each other.

The third burial finally occurs in a very ceremonial way, when the bones from the various maw phew are transferred into the common grave of the whole sib maw bah.

[436] A Schematic Representation of the Transfer of the Bones of a Sib:

1. Burial:	Cremation: maw shying	Cremation: maw shying	Cremation: maw shying	
		Cremation: maw shying	Cremation: maw shying	
(Bones of a single dead person, male or female)				(single grave)
2. Burial:	maw phew		maw phew	
(Bones of men and women separated)				Family grave)
3. Burial:		maw bah		
(Bones of the men and women separated)				(Sib grave)

a) First Burial (maw shying)

As soon as the cremation is over, the participants form a procession and bring the ashes or bones to the maw shying. One man hurries ahead, strewing leaves (ding shit=hot wood) alternately with grains of rice on the
764 road. Then the woman follows who carries the
292 bones. She is festively dressed and has a kind of scarf around her shoulders such as the Catholic priests wear for carrying the monstrance. In a village south of Lamin I saw

• 714
[272] on such an occasion a scarf which was decorated with gold edges and gold fringes. Whereas the relatives following next may walk and speak as they choose, the woman dressed in the scarf, who is carrying the bones wrapped in white cloth with respect against her breast, is required to be silent, not to vary to the right or to the left, but to walk in a straight line to the maw shing [sic] as far as this is possible.

714 Having arrived at the place, a rooster is
722 first sacrificed, which one calls the "guide to heaven" (u 'iar krad lynti), because he is supposed to accompany the spirit of the deceased into the other world. Afterwards three loaves of rice bread, an egg and brandy are sacrificed by the sacrificial priest (nongkmia), so that the ashes may rest well here. The bones are placed in an earthern pot after they are well washed, and the jar is bound with a white linen cloth. The three loaves of bread along with the egg and the left foot of the previously sacrificed rooster are placed beside the jar in the prepared grave (if one can call the hole that) and the grave is closed with a stone. Betel nuts, pepper leaves, and lime are placed on top.

b) Second Burial (maw phew)

After a while the bones in the separate maw shying are collected, but the bones of the men and the bones of the women are kept and carried separately. In a manner similar to the above the transfer into the maw phew occurs. There the bones are laid separated in the prepared places, and the usual sacrifices of the rooster, the kpu, and the liquor are offered.

c) Third Burial (maw bah)

• 764 The ceremonial transfer of the bones from the various maw phew into the common sib grave maw bah is probably the most important of all the ceremonies [437] which the Khasi have. For not merely the precise and orderly fulfillment of every prescribed ceremony and custom, even the smallest, is necessary here, but also an emotional or spiritual preparation is needed, which neither occurs nor is demanded among the Khasi for anything else. This emotional or spiritual preparation consists in the requirement that all members of a whole sib must live in peace with each other, since otherwise the ceremonial transfer of the bones may not take place.

[781] If all quarrels and discords are smoothed out, this is determined with the greatest exactitude, and a sacrificer who is taken from the sib inquires by egg throwing and the sacrifice of a chicken, which day would be suitable for the ceremonial act. If the day is determined in this way, all the relatives of the dead meet together in the house of the group mother [Stammutter] (iing seng): the children, the brothers and sisters, the nephews and nieces (shi kur shi para ryngkat u khun ka meinah meisan baroh), the great uncles and the little uncles (u nie-bah u nierit). Standing, they call upon the goddess who has created the members of the whole sib and say:

764 782

Kumno? hukum phi ka blei thaw bynriew buh bynriew ba ngan ieng ka lum ka kyn shew ka thep ka tian ia u suidiap u nongiap u lor u kap	How dost thou, o goddess, wish that I stand before thee, before thy face) to gather the hard earned, the stored up, the spirits of the dead,

764
782 baroh na tynrai ka iingseng iingkhad-duh?

the chiefs of the family and the old family chiefs of the deceased from the tribal house?

If the goddess now sanctions it, then they gather the sacrificial gifts and the sacrificial money (which is often thousands of rupees) to use them for the festivities.

Two women then go to the various maw phew and reverently fetch the bones that were placed there. One woman carries the bones of the male dead, the other the female ones, and both bring them to the house of the group mother, where they are ceremoniously placed and decorated with flowers and beautiful cloths. Now the spirits of the dead receive nourishment (ai bam), in that a pig, a rooster and a steer are sacrificed. The best pieces of these animals are kept in a basket in the house for a later division among the participants. The rest is sacrificed.

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535 Then there is dancing. (35) This ceremonial dance in honor of the deceased lasts either three or five or nine days, whatever seems best (and how long the collected money lasts). A place in front of the house is festively arranged and used as the place for dancing (lympung). Music is played and liquor distributed.

35. Cf. Table III, Picture 2: Ceremonial Dance in Honor of the Deceased.

764
769 On the day on which they intend to transfer the bones, the drums (ka ksing) and the kettledrums (ka nakra) are beaten, /438/ the flutes (ka sharati) are blown, guns (suloi) and cannons (ka man) are shot off. An ancestral

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769 doll is made of bamboo and this is supposed to represent either the great grandmother (the Jaubei of the sib) or the great great uncle (suidnia). They walk to the mawniam mawrukom (the ceremonial stones, ancestral stones) (36)

36. Gurdon, The Khasis, p. 141, gives another description of these customs. He says: In Cherrapunji two dolls are made, called ka puron and u tyngshop. The former is supposed to represent the Jaubei, the latter the suidnia. The dancers hold these dolls in their hands.

[211] with this ancestral doll (u tyngshop). While some dance, others set up "resting stones" or "foot stones" or "road stones" (maw kjat or maw lynti) on the way to the maw bah for the spirits of the dead, where they can rest on the way to the common grave. These stones are about a meter high and stand three in a row at each place. In front of them a flat stone like a platter is placed on four small stones which form a base or feet (maw kjat, i.e., stone foot). (37)

37. Cf. Table III, Picture 3: "Foot stone or road stone" among the Khasi.

On the day on which the dance ends they arrange ka pyngrei, i.e., a marriage feast of the spirits of the deceased, who died in their youth (grown but unmarried or childless). For this they choose two poor old people a man and a woman, of small size whom they pay for this.

764 769 The man is the groom of the dead young girl, the old woman the bride of the dead youth. They have the two scramble for the spirits' rice (ki pyniaknieh bam ka ja snaiap) and have them jump over the rice mortar (thlong) and the rice pestle. Then arrows are thrown as far as possible, which the two people are supposed to seize. This game of catching means the driving out of demons who surround the maw bah and wish to prevent the approach to the stones. Then one strews seed rice (u kaw rawai) on the road from the house to the end of the village. The two little people must now run with sticks (da ki diengduh) and thresh or beat the rice. This happens three times, one after another.

764 When it has become bright day, a handful of rice is taken from each of the relatives, as well as the contribution for defraying the [782] costs of the whole festivities. Then they fetch an "altar he-goat" (u' lang duwan), in order to cut off its head on the village altar (ha ka duwan ka shnong ka mulak). Now they make merry with drums and flags (ka ksing ka lama). The children and grandchildren sit down together and greet each other solemnly, [535] especially the "cousin" (u kha pka). Then a shield dance (mastieh) (38) is held. They

38. Cf. Table IV, Picture 1: Khasi men, ready for the shield dance.

perform three rounds. Then a he-goat is slaughtered, and all dancers with the shields bow three times before the "cousin" (u kha pka). Each of the sons of the group house (Stammhaus) does the same thing.

Now everybody rises, and someone sacrifices the scapegoat u' lang sait ksuid. A

764 A
[335] weapon dance is performed in which the sons follow one behind the other (according to age) (39) (shad wait, i.e. weapon dance).

39. Cf. Table IV, Picture 2: Weapon dance of the Khasi at the third burial.

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782 [439] When the weapon dance has ended, they go in a procession (as above for the maw shying) to the maw kjat or maw lynti. Having arrived there, each of the sons slaughters a he-goat by separating the head of the animal from the body with one blow. The usual sacrifice takes place. But usually there are not a lot of he-goats slaughtered (since there is not enough money) but only one, which is then called u' lang maw lynti. The retinue or escort of the sons ends here (hangne la kut ka jingle-it on lynti ki khun kha).

The others continue on to the maw bah. Having arrived there, they open the door (the closure of the container for the bones). A man, who is paid for it, crows three times to represent the spirit rooster iar iap. This occurs in front of the stone. Then all the spirits who are in the cave room are awakened (kyrsiew) by someone saying:

to khie to khie la wan u khun la wan u ksiew!

Stand up! Stand up! The children have come, the grandchildren have come!

Then they place the bones of the deceased inside, separated according to sex. In addition there are the sacrificial gifts: the bread and the cake, which they spread out (siang). Also morning and evening rice (i.e. cooked rice ready for eating) they place (theh —

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pour out) on the stone, also betel nuts and pepper leaves and ka reng ka ngab (the jawbones of the /sacrificed/ animals). The contribution (u khrong u khwang) is also added. Then the stone is closed.

Then they strike three times with a stick (sympat da ki dieng) on the stone, which they call tan ding (taken from fire), saying:

Hei nga tan ding nga tan theh ioh don uba mang uba thew u tynjuh u pan tien wat — See, I come towards the fire, see, I pour out the sacrificial gift, (40) so

40.- i.e., I perform the ceremonies faithfully.

leit khih wat leit win ap la ka khein ka bishar pyllun ho mei, ho iaw, ho nie, ho ma shi khrum ka maw ka nar! — that someone does not perhaps come and infringe and seek to demand a sacrifice. Do not disturb thyself! Be calm! and await patiently thy time of sacrifice. Is it not so, little mother, is it not so, mother-in-law, is it not so great uncle, is it not so, cousin, is it not so, all ye cousins who are under the stone!

On the next morning they figure out what everything has cost and what has been used. Then they take sacrificial liquor and say ('suit' means actually: they take it, present it, and hold it up ceremoniously):

Hei ko nie ko ma ko mei ko iaw ka suidiap — See, o uncle, see, o cousin, see, o little

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ko nongiap shi khrum /407 ka maw sngew ho la lut la sep katta to nang kyrsoi to nang kyrsih la iaid ka iew ka duwar ka kitnong ka bylla ka khaii ka pateng!

mother, see o grandmother of the deceased, o all ye dead, who are under this stone, listen! Thus and thus much we have used and given out, bless and increase it. May all our doings, all our household, all our daily wage, all our business make us happy!

Then they divide the remains of the sacrificial gifts (also the pieces of meat which were kept in the basket) and bow down and mourn all the deceased cousins and aunts. And when the sacrificial remains have been divided, they give everybody four to five rupees (five marks, sixty pfennigs to seven marks according to the peace evaluation) in addition and say:

Shim kein khun to leit long bynriew to leit man byn riew to roi to pa to long spah to man spah wei kumba nga la kha la long shisha bam don ka sang bamdon ka ma a yn sah ka nam yn sah ka rong yn sah ka ummat yn sah ka umpung mo.

So, take, my son, grow and be strong, be happy and successful; may thy wealth increase, as I conceived thee without shame and wrong; may thy reputation and thy honor endure, and also the tears and the wells (41) should endure, is it not so.

41. i.e., the descendants who will mourn thee.

Thus they do it to all the children one after the other. After three days they destroy

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782 the doll, whether it was (i.e. was supposed to represent) a male or a female one.

In conclusion they sacrifice a pig as a food sacrifice which they call the "doll pig" (u niang ai bam tyngshop).

After the passage of a month they sacrifice a pig again as a food sacrifice, which they call the "month pig" (u niang ai bam lait bnai).

And finally after a year they sacrifice still another pig as a food sacrifice which they call the "year pig" (u niang ai bam lait snem). (42)

42. Cf. Table I, Picture 1: Third burial place of the Khasi.

Gurdon (43) also describes this ceremony

43. Gurdon, The Khasis, p. 142.

differently, saying: "After they have arrived at the grave, the bones are washed three times in a basin (this is a custom from Cherrapunji). In Maushai the bones are exposed to the heat of a fire which has been lighted on a little platform. Then the stone door of the cinerarium is opened. The bones of the women are placed inside with the urn next to the wall which is farthest away from the door. But the bones of the men are placed next to the door. Many sibs place the bones of the men on the right side and the bones of the women on the left side. Then sacrifices of food and drink are offered the ancestors on a stone in front of the grave. The men perform a ceremonial dance with sword /440a Table I, 1. Third Burial Place. 2. the village Raliang/ 1/1

1/1 [cf. cat. 116, p. 66 -- Arnold+]

Table I

Third Burial Place

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[140a] The Village Raliang

Table II

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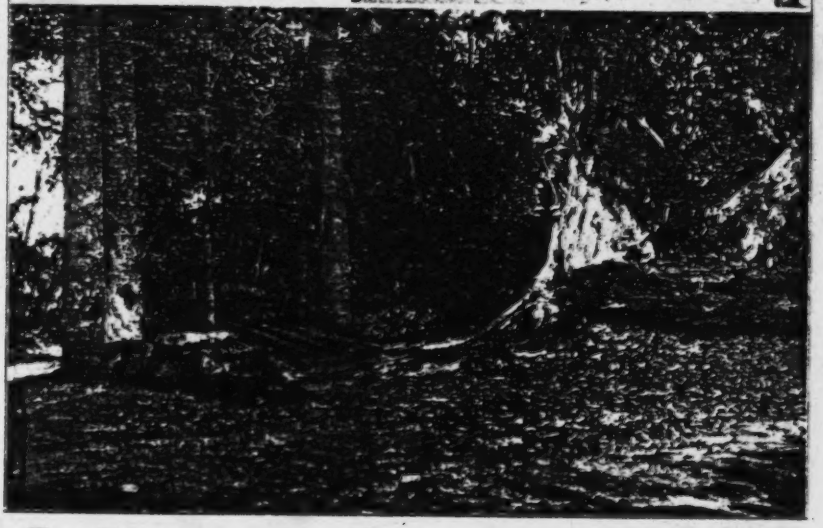
The Egg Oracle

Sacrifice of a Chicken

●764b



[140b] The Place of Cremation.

Table III

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[211]

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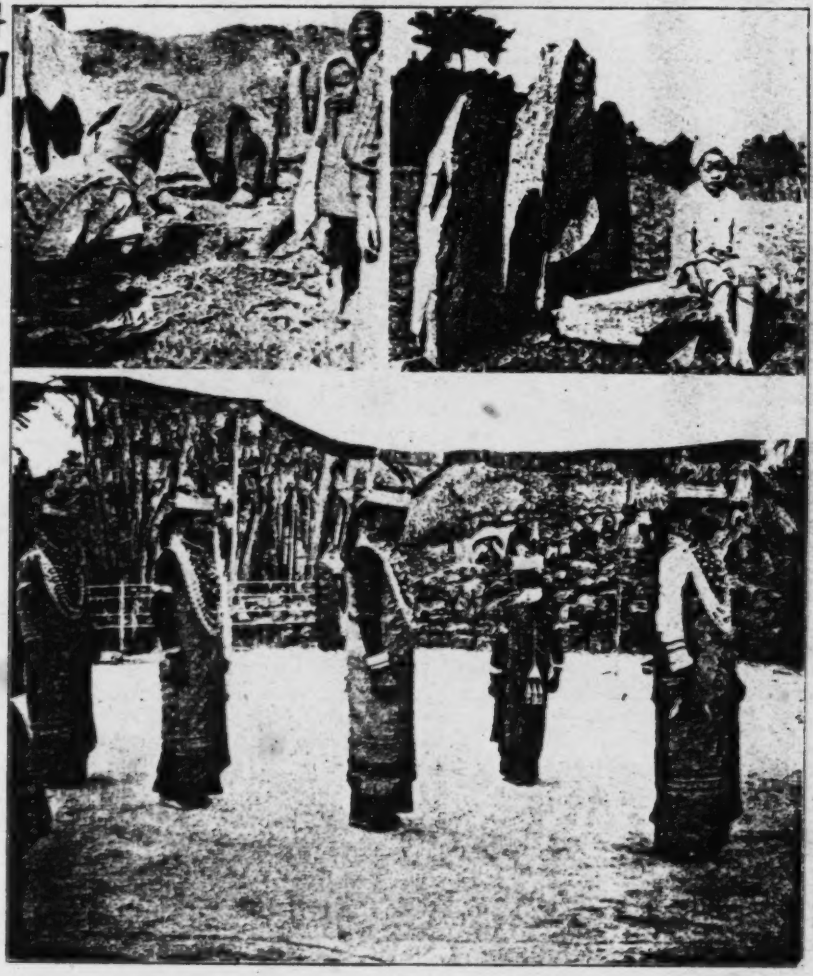

[140c] Gathering the Remains and the Ashes Ceremonial Dance. Foot Stone and Road Stone.

764
782 /440b Table II, 1. The Egg Oracle. 2. Sacrifice of a Chicken. 3. The Place of Cremation./ /440c/ Table III, 1. Gathering the Remains and the Ashes. 2. Ceremonial Dance. 3. Foot Stone and Road Stone./ /440d Table IV, 1. Ready for the Shield Dance. Weapon Dance./ /441/ and shield (three times), and the door of the grave is closed. Afterwards a flag is planted on the grave.

All the people go away, with the exception of three men. One of these sacrifices a rooster (iar tanding) in front of the grave, the second one sits behind the sacrificer and holds three firebrands in his hands, which he moves back and forth. This man crows three times like a rooster. The (third) man behind the grave listens most carefully to every noise that is noticed meanwhile in the grave. The belief actually exists, that if the ceremonies have not been performed properly, the grave will now tremble and move. When the three watchers are satisfied and convinced that there was no motion in the grave, they go home and report it to the relatives. This ceremony is called tan ding or the test by fire.

On the next morning, the woman who is the householder of the house of the group /Stammhaus/ divides the hind quarters of the sacrificial animals among all the participants of the sacrifices. The relatives are not allowed to go to work before three days have passed. The third day is called ka sngi lait.

The whole ceremony has symbolical meaning. The massive stone grave is supposed to represent a safe place for the spirits. If, however, the departed spirits are not satisfied with the whole ceremony, they will disturb their relatives in this world."

782

a) at the mau shing (first burial),
b) at the mau pheu (second burial),
c) at the mau bah (third burial).

10. The sacrifice in memory of the deceased:
a) the sacrifice at the end of a month,
b) the sacrifice at the end of a year.

These various sacrifices can be offered by the official lyngdohs as well as by other lyngdohs or even by ordinary men from the people, provided they know precisely the ritual which governs the family concerned and are guided by it.

782 A definite spiritual attitude is not required
• 764 for any sacrifice. There is only one exception
578 here: namely at the sacrifice for the third and last burial of the bones in the mau bah. This may only be carried out if all relatives of the sib concerned are living in peace with each other. This must be established by the lyngdoh himself who is performing the sacrifice. If any kind of enmity or a quarrel is discovered by the investigation, the burial and the sacrifice that goes with it must be postponed until the condition of general peace in the family is fulfilled.

782 [220] As concerns the place of the sacrifices, the areas may be divided in the following way:

1. Sacrifice is made in the hut:
at the name giving,
after recovering health.
2. Sacrifice is made in the courtyard in front of the hut:
when questioning spirits,
before important business,
in cases of sickness,
khein ksuid,
in case of death.
3. Sacrifice is made away from the house:
at a cremation at the place it occurs,
at the three different burials of the bones at the places where they occur,

sense. For at his entrance into life and at his departure from it both are used in the religious ceremonies. If a boy is born, a bow and three arrows are placed beside him at the name giving, (35) After various ceremonies,

35. P.F. Stegmiller, "Aus dem religiösen Leben der Khasi" /The Religious Life of the Khasi/, Anthropos, 1921-1922, pp. 425 ff.

which cannot be described here, the sacrificer shows the boy the bow and three arrows, and calls upon him to become a good shooter. At the end of all the ceremonies the bow and the arrows are carefully attached to the inside of the straw roof of the hut.

It should be mentioned that at a Khasi cremation (36) a bow and three arrows are also

36. P.F. Stegmiller, loc. cit., p. 430 ff.

used. They are kept in readiness with the other ceremonial objects of the dead, while the corpse is being shown for the last time to the participants in the funeral. As soon as the fire flames up on the funeral pyre, three arrows are also shot off: one towards the north, one towards the south, and the third towards the east. The Khasi call these arrows 'nam-tympem.

his wife and children. ooo

2. Holy Pieces of Land and Forest

A special kind of land property is still encountered in the Khasi and Jaintia Mountains. These are pieces of land and forests which are considered sang or kyntang, forbidden or holy, thus kyndêu sang, khlau kyntang, forbidden fields, holy forests. They are also named in connection with the name god, for example, khlau Blei, forest of the gods, which, to a certain extent, might offer the key to their purpose and meaning. The hands of man are not supposed to disturb this kind of property; this property is sacred to the gods and at the most may be used in their service.

It is not easy to trace the origin and beginnings of these reserves. But several solutions may be found in regard to sections of land. When the /136/ Catholic mission station was founded in the village of Schella which is located on a steep mountain slope, it was hard to find a place that was halfway suitable and big enough to build even a small dwelling on it. Finally the missionary discovered such a place somewhat outside the village. But then there was a new difficulty. The place was the cremation area for the dead and therefore was sang /taboo/. The spirits of the dead would punish every intruder severely. The people were finally persuaded to burn their dead somewhere else, but it was more difficult to find any who were ready to help with the work of the building. Even those whom the missionary finally persuaded to help still suffered heavily from the fear of the punishment of the gods and continuously one or the other of them had imaginary illnesses.

In the cases of more extensive pieces of land, the snake worshippers (thlen), who carry on their dreadful activities in the Khasi Mountains, (8) may offer an explanation sometimes. If such a person is

8. Im Stromtal des Brahmaputra, /In the River Valley of the Brahmaputra/, pp. 76ff.

convicted of murder, which he has committed in the service of the snake god in order to sacrifice the blood of the slain person to him, and if he wishes to free himself from the conviction, he can do nothing other than sell all his movable and immovable property. The latter thus becomes sang. Nobody would dare to take over the fields and gardens, to plant anything there, or to touch any fruit on that property. Thus in Cherrapunji a native Catholic was able to take

presentation of the written statement of the chieftain and the village elders that they would have no objection to it. The avaricious renter of the divine land mentioned above was despised by all.

As concerns the holy forests, which often extend picturesquely from the highest peak down the slope and are overgrown with gnarled oaks and bright colored rhododendron, no tree may be felled there; at the most, fallen wood or wood torn down by a storm or already rotten wood may be taken. The spirits of the forest, as punishing gods, will revenge every offense. Tigers and leopards, apes, bears, and snakes enjoy an undisturbed existence here. The only case in which wood may be cut in these divine woods is for the religious cremation ceremonies of the dead. It is the custom of the Khasi to set fire often to great areas in order to fertilize the ground with the ashes of grasses, trees, and shrubs without regard for the new growth of trees, and to make potato fields there for a year or two or to grow mountain rice, millet, or something similar and then to leave the field fallow again. Thus this is a clever precautionary rule, since there might otherwise be cases when there might be no wood for cremating the dead.

(Continuation follows)

/300/ Family Property and Maternal Rights
by C. Becker S.D.S., Würzburg

Gurdon says, (10) that these holy groves were formerly the property

10. The Khasis, p. 87.

of a village. That is not always so as the following case will demonstrate. I am also relating this because it grants us a deeper look into the whole customs of the clan under discussion.

Several decades ago, a Khasi who had become a Protestant, U Jacob Shai by name, was installed as a clerk with the English government official in Jowai. In order to assure his family a better living than just his meager salary, he yearned for land. By birth from Jongushen in the War territory, he remembered that he could obtain his aim in the neighboring village Syndai from the family clan Umliang. So one day he went thither. After the customary greetings, and refreshment with a water pipe and betel nut and conversation about various indifferent matters, he mentioned his desire. "I know," he said in the polite language of even these simple natural men, "I know the goodness and the good name of your clan /Stamm/ and the elders

8: Gurdon G-3 (no date) 1904 AR7 Khasi AR7

child is a female. Up to the present time I have not discovered any trace of the *couvade.* [546]

6. *Marriage ceremony.*—Marriage is a purely civil contract. The most prominent features of the Khasi marriage are the following:— [581] 585

(*a*) The *pynhiar synjat*, or betrothal.

(*b*) The pouring out of libations of liquor to *Ka Iawbei* (the first maternal ancestress).

(*c*) The eating by bride and bridegroom out of the same plate.

(*d*) The mixing of liquor by the *ksiangs*, or go-betweens.

(*e*) The taking of the bride to the house of mother of the bridegroom, where a ring is placed on her finger by her mother-in-law.

7. *Divorce* can be easily obtained amongst the Khasis. Adultery, want of issue, and incompatibility of temper, are some of the more frequent causes. The usual ceremony of divorce is as follows:—The husband hands the wife five cowries, or pice. The wife hands these back to the husband, with five of her own. The man then either throws them away or hands them over to some village elder, who throws them away. Divorce is then complete. 586

8. *Death, ceremonies.*—The corpse is bathed and laid on its back. A fowl's egg (*ka'lengkypoh*) is then placed on the navel. A cock (*ka' iarkrad lynti* = the fowl that scratches the way) is sacrificed. The limbs of the fowl and its feathers are placed in a bamboo basket, which is hung up near the head of the corpse. Rich people sacrifice a cow also, called *ka masi pynsum.* When a cow is sacrificed it is shot through the heart with an arrow. From the time of bathing the body till it is burned, offerings are offered daily; these offerings are called *ai ja miet ja step.* It is the custom amongst some to place the corpse in a long narrow box or coffin, which has been hollowed out of the trunk of a tree; this is called *ka shyngoid.* When this procedure is adopted, a small pig, which is killed by a spear (*u narsuh*) is sacrificed. This sacrifice takes place during the night. A goat (*U lang sait ksuid* = a goat to wash the devil)—which is believed to be a scapegoat to bear the sins of the deceased—is sacrificed. The corpse is then taken outside and placed on a bamboo bier (*ka krong*). When the *shyngoid* is used it is placed inside the bier. Some rice is scattered on the ground, and water is poured from a *lhota.* On arrival at the burning-place, the bier, with the corpse in it, is placed on the pyre, or *jingthang.* The egg placed on the navel is then broken on a plank and a fowl (*Ka iar padat*) is sacrificed. Two arrows are shot, one to the east and another to the west (this is a Khasi custom only); the arrows are intended for the protection of the spirit on its way to another world. Fire is then applied to the pyre. 764

8: Gurdon G-3 (no date) 1904 AR / Khasi AR /

764 When the body has been burnt, the ashes and the uncalcined bones are collected by the relatives of the deceased and washed. They are then placed in a dish (*ka pliang*) which is taken to a stone repository for the bones (*mawshieng*); here a further sacrifice takes place. For three days after the burning, the maternal relatives frequent the *mawshieng*, where they offer articles of food for the spirit of the departed to eat, and then three eggs are broken (called *shat leng lait ia*) in order to ascertain what is the cause of death. Until this egg-breaking has taken place the family is taboo. The ashes and the uncalcined bones are subsequently removed from the *mawshieng*, and are placed in the family mausoleum, or *mawbah*. On this occasion a special ceremony takes place.

787 9. *Divination by breaking eggs.*—As this is a very peculiar custom, it deserves some description. Shadwell describes it as follows:—

[153] Each case of sickness or other calamity is attributed to the influence of some evil spirit, and the first step is to ascertain what particular spirit has been at work, and for this the great institution of egg-boiling is brought into play. An expert (but not a professional) sits down before a board, in the centre of which he places an egg on a few grains of rice; after invoking the egg to speak the truth, he sweeps the rice off the board, excepting one grain left on any spot fancy dictates. Then naming a particular spirit, he asks that if he be the cause of evil, a part of the shell of the egg may be deposited near the grain of rice; he then strikes the egg sharply on the centre of the board. This process is repeated, if necessary, till the required information is obtained. The next thing is to discover what sort of offering will be acceptable to the spirit. This is ascertained in a precisely similar way, but the desired result is often not arrived at till much time and many eggs have been expended.

I have personally witnessed this egg-breaking and can vouch for the correctness of Mr. Shadwell's description. The Khasis do nothing of what they consider to be of the least importance without breaking eggs. When a Khasi builds a new house, or before he proceeds on a journey, he always breaks eggs to see whether the building or the journey will be lucky or not. I have quoted the description of egg-breaking at length, as I am informed that there is some similar custom extant in the Arracan Hill Tracts. I hope that it will be possible to ascertain whether or not there is any similar custom in Burma.

526 10. *Khasi archery*—Archery is a regular institution amongst the Khasis, who are very fond of it. Archery may be described as the Khasi national game. There are regular archery contests between the people of different villages, one village challenging another to shoot off a match. Certain conditions are fixed, such as the date and place of the match, the number of arrows to be shot by the archers, the distinguishing marks to be given to arrows of the two different sides, etc.,

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769 (2) *U'suid' sia*, —or departed maternal great-uncle.
(3) *U thaw lang*, —or departed great-grandfather.

824 771 A very striking feature of the Khasi religion is the use of the leaves of the *diengsing* (*Q lanceafolia*) or Khasi oak tree. The leaves of this tree are used to cover the sacrifical knife, a sprig of the oak is implanted in the ground before the sacrifices of fowls or goats take place, an oak bough is hung up inside the house along with the jaw-bones and horns of sacrificed animals and the feathers of fowls. A great post of oak is to be found within the *arcana* of the sacred residence of the Siem priestess of Khyrim, the custodian of the religion of the State of that name. Another feature is the use of altars of stone on certain ceremonial occasions, and no Khasi religious ceremony takes place without the use of a small gourd a *klong* from which libation are poured out to the gods. Dancing always accompanies ceremonies of any importance, *e.g.*, funeral ceremonies, the erection of memorial stones, and the great *puja* of the Siems of Nongkrem.

769 764 211 12. *Memorial stones.*—These are without doubt the most prominent feature connected with these people. The first thing that strikes any visitor to the Khasi and Jaintia Hills is the immense number of these stones. The latter are placed in a line, a higher one in the centre, and lower ones on each side. The centre monolith is occasionally covered with a round flat stone. The upright stones are always in uneven numbers, being in sets of three, five, seven, or even nine stones. In front of each set of three stones is placed one horizontal stone, or cromlech which rests on three or four small upright stones, the horizontal stone being raised to about one foot from the ground. If five upright stones are erected, two horizontal stones are placed in front of them, and if seven are erected three, and so on. There can be no doubt that these stones possess considerable significance, but what exactly that significance is I am at present engaged in investigating. As far as my information extends at present, I give the following explanation.

Memorial stones may be divided for the present into two classes—

(a) Stones erected by the family, or *kur*, in accordance with the Khasi custom of ancestor worship.
(b) Stones which are erected by children in honour of a deceased parent.

It should be remarked that both classes of stones are merely cenotaphs, the mausoleums of the ancestors or the parents often being nowhere near the places where the memorial stones are erected. Taking class (a) first: Supposing that five upright stones are erected and two horizontal stones as depicted in plate III. 1/7

1/7 [see end plate 1 - - - Analyst]

Stone No. 3 , the middle is called *U Maw Kni*, i.e., the stone of the maternal uncle, Nos. 2 and 4 are called *Ki pyrus, Ki pura*, i.e., the brothers or sisters, and the nephews or nieces. No. 1 is called *U Maw Kniag*, i.e., the stone of the drum, and No. 5 *U Maw kait*, the stone of the plantain. No. 6 is called *Ka Iaubri tyrsi*. The word *tyrsi* meaning root, *Ka Iaubri tyrsi* signifies the first maternal grandmother of the family. The above is the system of naming stones in Maosbai Raj—other systems will be described in the monograph.

Class (b).—Stones of this class are generally, I am informed, three in number, consisting of three upright stones as shown in plate IV and a flat stone in front, as in the case of stones falling under class (a).

Here there is a marked difference in that the big stone in the middle is called *U Maw thaolong*, or the stone of the grave of or father. Nos. 1 and 3 are the brothers or the male cousins of U , father, and No. 4 is erected in honour of *Ka Iaubri*, or the grandmother of the father, —not the first ancestress of the clan, as in the case in stones falling under class (a). The post split at its top containing the jawbone of a bullock which has been sacrificed in honour of the deceased parent should be observed, *vide Fig.* B. It was formerly the custom and is still in some places the custom, to spread offerings upon the flat stones to appease the spirits of the deceased ancestors. These stones, which are only 2 to 3 feet from the ground, suggest the idea of sacrificial tables at some time or other. Stones 3, 4, and 5 in Fig. A are between 9 and 10 feet high, but there are several larger monoliths in these hills.

The description of the stones in figures A and B was given me by a man of some intelligence at Nongkrem, but many different explanations of the names, and regarding the significance of these stones, are given by other persons living in various parts of the hills, and it is not unlikely that the account I have tentatively advanced may have to be modified subsequently. The system of each clan, apparently, varies to some extent from the other, and in some cases to a very considerable degree. In the Jaintia Hills very large groups of stones are found near villages, which are thought by the Syntengs to have been merely erected by the sides of roads as *Mow-slong-thait*, or seats for weary travellers, or for persons attending markets. At one place in the Jaintia Hills memorial stones were erected to commemorate a woman, *Ka Kyrpait*, who in generations past is said to have had thirty husbands. It may, however, be stated that no such polyandrous custom has been found at the present day. The stones are reported to be thirty in number. There are also many stones at a place on the road from Shillong to Jowai said to have been erected to commemorate those who fell in a battle between the Syntengs and one of the Khasi States.

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As mentioned before, these stones are not gravestones, they are chapel, both the vertical and the horizontal stones, remarkably like the pictures of *menhirs* and *dolmens* that appear in Fergusson's work on rude stone monuments. It is a remarkable fact that Dalton mentions the existence of apparently very similar memorial stones in certain *Mo* and *Munda* villages in Chota Nagpur, and there is a drawing to be found at page 32 of Yule's Embassy to the Court of Ava of a cromlech which is apparently very like the cromlechs or *menhirs* that are to be met with every day in these hills. It is most unfortunate that the [212] Khasis, owing to their want of a written language in former days, possess no written accounts of these stones, and that the Khasis of the present day are so very vague in their ideas about them, for I am inclined to believe that the proper elucidation of this question of memorial stones may prove to be the key to the origin of these people. I therefore strongly advise that a very careful search be made for similar stones, such as I have described, in other parts of India. It is possible that the Khasis may have found monoliths erected by some prehistoric race when they arrived in the Khasi Hills, and they may have adopted the custom of erecting memorial stones by the force of example, but the use of such stones seems to fit in with the Khasi system of ancestor worship, and it is remarkable that the shapes of the stones should be so very similar to those which exist in England, Ireland and Brittany, and I believe also in Denmark and Scandinavia. Is the custom of erecting such memorial stones in any way connected with people practising the matriarchate? The whole subject is a deeply interesting one, and I hope that it may be possible to throw some light on it.

13. *Taboo.*—The Khasis have an elaborate system of *seng*, or taboo. There are very many different kinds of *seng*, but some of them are the following :—

Special taboo, at time of pregnancy.—(a) It is *seng* for a pregnant woman to accompany a funeral procession.

(b) It is *seng* for a woman in the first stage of pregnancy to finish any sewing which she may have commenced before she became enceinte. There is a similar prohibition regarding the finishing of the plaiting of wicker baskets.

(c) It is *seng* for the husband of a pregnant woman to thatch the *ridge* of the roof of a house at such a time.

(d) It is *seng* under similar circumstances to fix an axe or a dao in a handle.

Ordinary taboos.—(i) It is *seng* to build a house with stone walls on all four sides.

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PLATE III.

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[End plate 1]

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[End plate 2]

nounce the hard G; and in all words of Hindustani origin this letter has the sound of K. 101 [197]

They are called by the tribes of Kúkis and Nágás on the west "Káro", the name they themselves have for the whole mass of hill people on their western side, the Gāros, though as we pass towards their confines, we find the names of local clans giving way to this general term which was not known to some of the villagers of West Nongstoin, who call the Gāros "Dékor."

The Gāro appellation for the Khāsis is "Dikkil" or "Digil"; and it was very interesting to find, after visiting the villages of both, that they mutually fear each other, and consequently border raids never occur. The Gāros owned that they feared the bow and arrow of their neighbour, a weapon they themselves are unacquainted with the use of.

The Khāsis always point to the east as the quarter from which they emigrated, but there is very little, if any, similarity with the languages of the people now occupying the hills on that side. [173] [197]

Before entering further on the subject matter of this paper, I must request my hearers or readers to remember that having no knowledge colloquially of the Khasi language, the information I give was obtained from natives who understood either English or Hindustani well. The greater part of the information was given me by a very intelligent man, a native inspector of schools in the district; thus I hope that all errors that exist may be hereafter corrected by others who have been able to elucidate with greater exactness the meaning of their many different rites and superstitions. 115

Certainly the most striking objects of interest in the Khāsi Hills are the upright stone monuments that are to be seen all over the country; these, set up by the wayside, or in the villages, more frequently cutting the sky on prominent hills, with the large slabs horizontally set before them, at once recall the Druidical remains of our own island, northern France, etc., and lead one to marvel at the similarity of the custom, and to inquire its origin and design. Many who visit those hills take it at once for granted that they are the graves of illustrious men, or, after a vain endeavour to get some information from the coolies about them, let the matter rest, or finally believe that the ashes of the dead, to whose memory the monoliths are erected, are buried under the flat kind of altar or dolmen seen in front. 764 211

It is always a very difficult matter to obtain information from semi-civilised people on such a subject as their religious rites, especially if the inquirer is ignorant of their language. A slight knowledge of Hindustani on the part of the Khāsia villager, renders the attempt still more hopeless, and the information given quite erroneous.

764 211 The tall upright stones are called "Mao bynna", from "mao", a stone; "bynna", to make known, to be informed, literally a monument. They are also known by the term, "Mao shinran", the male stone, while the flat seat-like slab in front is called "Mao Kynthai", the female stone, representative of all life, being in pairs. My informant explained this by saying the monument would be imperfect without the flat stone or its female adjunct.

769 764 211 The ashes of the dead are never deposited under the horizontal slabs always to be seen in front of the upright sets, the monument having no connection with funeral obsequies whatever. The monument is purely one to perpetuate the memory of a person long deceased, who, as a spirit, has watched over or brought good fortune to a descendant, his family, or clan. Wealth or [554] renown of the deceased has no connection with the size of the monument, which may be of any dimensions, from stones a foot or two and upward, but depends on the wealth of those who erect such mementos, and on the benefits the deceased has conferred aftar passing into the world of spirits and demons, for, according to Khāsi belief, the spirits of the dead and demons are the cause of all joy or woe—they give riches or strike with disease and death.

These monuments are not set up facing any particular point of the compass; the front is generally selected, having reference to the site and its surroundings: thus a number set up together on a hill-top will be found facing outwards, those by the wayside facing the road; however, single sets, standing on a hill-top or rising ground, as a rule, face to the southward.

The history connected with the erection of some large slabs near Cherra Poonjee will exemplify this curious custom. One of the clans, "Kūr" in Cherra, is known as the "Nongtariang"; and many years ago died an old lady of the clan, not famous for anything in particular during her lifetime, but whose virtues appear to have been great after her demise, for after this the Nongtariang clan, from being a poor one, rose gradually to considerable wealth; she, when propitiated and called on for aid, never failed her race, and in return, after some sixty years or more, they raised to her memory five well-cut stones, which are to be seen on the west side of the road between Cherra Poonjee and Surarun, the central monolith adorned with a kind of rose cut in relief on the front face, and an ornamental disc on the apex. It would appear that she still remained the guardian spirit of her clan; they continued to prosper, and as a further token to her memory, they added in 1869 five more stones on the other side of the road, and in a line with the first set.

It may very naturally be asked how descendants possibly dis-

9: Godwin-Austen G-3 (no date) 1872 AR7 Khasi AR7

cover what their ancestors are doing for them, and what their views and inclinations may be as regards the amount of aid they may give. To a Khasia there is no difficulty about the matter; when in distress or requiring aid of any kind, seeking omens by the breaking of eggs (which I will hereafter describe) he appeals to and propitiates any one ancestor he may select; only one or two may promise such protection, and these it may so happen have died years ago. The benefit also conferred may be very trivial, and sufficiently acknowledged by the setting up of stones of small size; on the contrary, if great favours are conferred on the wealthy we find large monoliths forming conspicuous land-marks on many a hill-top, scattered over a large area of country, and which are mostly known to the country round by the name of the individuals who have wrought so much good in their after state.

These stones are never erected in pairs or in even numbers; in counting over a very large series still perfect, I found them invariably in sets of three, five, seven, or, as I have before mentioned in the case of the Nongtariang clan, in two sets, five and five, on opposite sites, to the same individual.* Even numbers are considered unfinished or imperfect.

A reference to the plans given, numbers 1, 2, 3, 4, will show the various arrangements in which the stones are set up, both in a segment of a circle and at right angles to each other, as in fig. 3. The most common form, however, is in line, fig. 4. Fig. 1 consisted of a circular platform raised about two feet, faced with rough stones on the front face. These three examples were observed on the hill of Lailang-kote, where the bazar is held, and I have not seen anywhere else the monoliths so arranged; in other parts of the country they are invariably set up in a straight row.

These monuments are also erected for such a reason as the following:—During the illness of a person, every kind of propitiation and exorcism either by the breaking of eggs, sacrifice of fowls, pigs, etc., and by the examination of the liver and viscera, having been made, and then failing to restore him; the sick man may vow that should he recover, he will erect a set of stones to one of his ancestors, who, it is presumed, on knowing of the intention, will do his best to save him.

In setting up these slabs all members of the community are under an obligation to assist on such an occasion, and are not paid for their labour, beyond receiving in the evening a little food or liquor at the dwelling of the family who have sought the aid. The skilled workmen employed on the stone-cutting are,

* Three and five are the most frequent numbers met with, nine very rare I have seen eleven.

9: Godwin-Austen G-3 (no date) 1872 AR7 Khasi AR7

however, regularly paid, as is done when cutting the stones for the funeral platform; while this work is in progress musicians are also entertained, and a continual beating of tom-toms (hand-drums) is kept up while the work is in progress.

That many of these monuments, and by far the larger number, are of great age, may be inferred from the fact that their history is quite lost.

As to their distribution, they are to be found over all the higher part of the range; the finest, certainly, in the central portion and in the vicinity of the larger villages, such as Cherra Poonjee, Juwai, Nurtiang, etc.

In Nongstoin, on the west, they gradually die out, and a few, not exceeding three or four feet in height, are to be found in the Khasia villages towards the Garo tribes, but at this limit the Langams come in, and their customs assimilate more with the former-named people. It is the same on the east and north-east of Jaintia; the stones set up are smaller and of rougher form, and by no means so numerous, yet they are to be seen in all kinds of out-of-the-way places quite overgrown with grass and jungle, where villages have not existed for years. Indications were not wanting, shewing that the country had been formerly much more populous, especially on the northern slopes of the Khasi and Janitia Hills. I have, on the other hand, never come across structures of the kind anywhere beyond the limits of Khasi-speaking people, that is, between longitude 91 deg. and 92 deg. 30 min., which includes the Jaintia Hills, the people of which part are called "Sintengs", differing in some minor points from the Khasis; the dialect is distinct, and there is so strong a type-form of likeness and expression, the two can be generally separated without inquiry. The same remarks hold good for the western side; a Khasi of the border Nongstoin villages can be told off at a glance: so strong are the great clan likenesses.

I have traversed the whole country on the east: viz., the North Cachar Hills, inhabited by tribes of Kookis and Nāgas, and had the Khasi ever occupied permanently a larger area either on the east or west, particularly the former, emigrating, as they are supposed to have done, from that side, I think we might have expected to find, occasionally, remains of their imperishable monuments. The only exception that I know of occurs on the road from Nenglo to Hangrūng, in the North Cachar Hills district, beyond Asālu, a part of the country now in the occupation of Nagas, and formerly entirely in that of Kacharis, who are Bodos or Méchis. The road lies through forest, keeping along the high spur; at about two miles from the peak of Hemeo are to be seen several large slabs of stone nearly level with the ground, one ten feet by six, covering some sort of receptacle, for the ends of the

9: Godwin-Austen G-3 (no date) 1872 AR7 Khasi AR7

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stones facing the sides are plainly visible. Near to these slabs is a platform with sides built up of rough stone, similar to those about Cherra Poonjee. Now Nāgas bury their dead, and no monument is erected, the graves being dug in the village street, often at the very door of the deceased person's house, all the protection and covering being a rough one of bamboo or straight sticks interwoven and neatly pegged down all round with hooked sticks. Some tribes of Kūkis bury, others burn, but I have never observed any stones set up, or used to cover the grave. There is just a possibility that the slabs on the Hemeo ridge are the remains of an old Khāsi settlement, occupied, perhaps, for a short period when on their emigration westward.

The largest collection of huge slabs and upright stones that I have seen anywhere in the Khāsi Hills, is at Lailang-kote, the arrangement is so different in every way, that there can be little doubt that it was erected for a very different purpose, and was probably a place of meeting of the chiefs and elders of the clans. The steps to ascend it would indicate such a purpose, and we can imagine all the men of rank and influence seated around, and harangued by one of their number. I could never learn the history of this structure; although I made frequent inquiries, they could not say when or by whom it was set up. The stones, especially the large horizontal one, are of great size; this, with others, is of the granite found close by, but the hill on which the structure stands is an outlier of quartzitic sandstone, horizontally stratified, and great labour must have been expended in dragging such huge blocks into their present position; for the slope to the top of the rise, though not great, yet is quite sufficient to render such work a formidable undertaking. The weight of the largest horizontal slab was twenty tons eighteen hundredweight, and of all the stones composing its construction eighty tons. The horizontal granite slabs were unhewn, as well as the highest upright monolith, which stood eighteen feet nine inches. Eight of the upright stones out of the eleven were of sandstone. The largest slab is an irregular oval in shape, thirty feet by thirteen feet in longest and shortest axis, with a mean thickness of one foot and one-third, standing nearly five feet and a-half above the ground, and resting on ten upright unhewn pillars of granite; on the south side are four other slabs arranged close to the edge of the large one, and round all rise the eleven upright pillars; on the eastern end are two other slabs forming steps to ascend by.

I give a drawing of this very curious monument with a plan, and in an appendix the measurements of every stone, and these shew better than aught else the great massiveness of the work, and what an amount of labour these people must have expended in collecting the materials and setting them in this spot.

[see end plates 2-4, category 116 — — ~ — Analyst]

764 211 [483] I never saw the Khasis engaged in raising a stone into the upright position, but I saw the spars which had formed a sort of cradle on which the stones forming the monument erected by the Nongtariang clan previously alluded to had been dragged from the spot where they had been quarried. They consisted of strong curved limbs of trees roughly smoothed and rounded, and would present a very small surface to friction. These stones had been taken from the side of a hill near, and had apparently been wedged out of the face of a step in the exposed sand-stone strata.

It may be as well that I should here give some account of the funeral rites of the Khasis, which will show there is no connection between them and the monuments I have been describing, and with which the other stone erections have no doubt been often confounded. In their funeral rites there is much that is wonderfully strange, and to those unacquainted with their superstitions, appears unmeaning. There can be no doubt but the Khasis have a very strong belief in a future state, and to say that they have no religion, as has been stated by some writers, is erroneous. True, they have no temples for either worship or idols, the religion of the people is principally a demon worship, and we find the Khasi ever in communion with or in the power, as he supposes, of the spirits of those who have gone before him. While, added to these spirits of their ancestors are numberless demons, male and female, ever ready, if not propitiated, to bring evil upon himself or his undertakings, and whose power even extends over the spirits of the dead. Every dark shady wood, every stream, every conspicuous hill has its presiding demon, which in many instances gives the name to the site. Thus, the hill of Lārū, in North Jaintia, beyond Nongjinghi, is the abode of a one-legged demon, whom to see is death, but who was occasionally heard in the dense forest that clothed the northern steep face of the mountain, so said the credulous villagers of Nongtūng.

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764 The dead are burnt on a funeral pyre, the logs of which are arranged very regularly, and the body lies in a sort of bed formed by them.

The calcined bones and ashes are collected and placed in an earthen vessel (small "ghara"), and are generally buried in some adjacent spot, a stone being placed over the vase for security; they do not, however, remain permanently in this place. Every family or clan has a separate receptacle for these remains, constructed in several ways, but always covered with a heavy slab of stone: these receptacles are called "Mao-bah," the great stone "Mao-shíing," a bone depository—lit., the "bone stone."

M. Schlagintweit has fallen into an error regarding the dolmen-shaped structures, and was not aware that this form is so

9: Godwin-Austen G-3 (no date) 1872 AR/ Khasi AR/

intimately connected with cremation, and that bangles and other ornaments are to be found in them. Whether such are removed from the body at the present day is a point I did not satisfactorily clear up, but which is one of interest. 764

You find the cromlech cuboidal form of four well-cut large stones on edge, closely fitted and surmounted by another horizontal one closing the structure. I give a drawing of a very large and striking one not far from the mission houses at Cherra; one of the sides of this has fallen and been removed, it is probably of great age, and the family is extinct. In other cases a number of rough stones are set up in a circle, crowned by a flat circular slab. I have also seen them of octagonal form, the sketch represents one in the south of Jawai, near the site of a deserted village, one of the side stones has fallen outwards, thus exposing the interior; in this I found several calcined bones and two bangles or wristlets of brass; this surprised me, for I was not aware that ornaments were left on the body on cremation; nor do I think they are at the present day. There were no traces of pottery either, and the bones had not been placed in a vessel as is the usual custom now. The structure was apparently of considerable age, and no village had occupied the site for many years.

A very general form at present of these bone receptacles is that of a heavy slab of stone, level with the ground, covering a cyst, which is lined with stones.

The bones are not consigned to these receptacles for some time, often a year or more after the burning of the body, and in no case until it has been ascertained that the soul of the deceased is at rest, and leading a life, or rather a new existence of happiness; should the whole of his family remain in health, this state is assumed to be attained, if, on the contrary, any member be afflicted with illness or pain, the spirit is understood to be restless and in want of something; the breaking of eggs is resorted to, and such may indicate that it is necessary to sacrifice a fowl or goats, and that the bones of the defunct be taken up and buried in another spot. Such removal, however, in the case of the most troublesome ghost is only done three times, and restless as he may be, the bones are then finally deposited in the family bone receptacle; man and wife are never deposited together; they belong to different clans, thus the ashes of children are placed in the receptacle of their mother's tribe to which they are considered to belong. I would here refer to the paper written by the Rev. J. Pryse in the *Calcutta Review* for 1854, p. 128, with his excellent description of a form of sacrifice. (Appendix B.) [113] 1

The collection of the bones into one vault, as it may be termed, is done under the impression that the souls of the departed may 764 775

1 [See category 116, pp. 137-8.—Analyst]

9: Godwin-Austen G-3 (no date) 1872 AR7 Khasi AR7

764 775 all mingle together again in one large family without trouble or suffering. The idea of a member of a family being a wanderer in the other world, cut off from, and unable to join the circle of the spirits of his own clan, is most repugnant to the feelings of a Khasi or Sinteng. Thus we find every attempt is made on the death of a man in a distant village or district to lead his spirit back with his calcined bones to his native place. For instance, should he die alone on a trading expedition into North Cachar and be buried by a tribe of some other denomination, some relation, if he can afford it, will proceed to disinter and burn the remains; such will be done years after when accident may take some relative near the place. Of this I had an interesting example in my own camp when marching from the Khāsi Hills to Asālu.* While encamped at Thangnansip in North Cachar, one of my coolies (porters) came one morning and asked leave for the day for himself and some of his fellows; on asking why they wanted it at such an unusual time, when we were in the field and moving camp, he said that a relation had died in that village while on a trading speculation with dried fish and salt towards Asālu from Jawai. It appeared that the man, having got an attack of fever, had been left behind by his companions, in the hope that he would get round in a few days and then follow them; he, however, eventually died, and was buried by the Kūkis of "Kabúr." My men had with some difficulty discovered the grave (for many years had elapsed), the site of Kabúr had been changed in the interim, as is the custom of the Kukis, who seldom remain more than four years tilling the same ground, frequently not more than three, known in that part of India as "Joom cultivation"; high grass covered the old village site; the Khasia coolies, however, disinterred the remains, burnt them, and the residue was carefully preserved and sent back to Jawai, the man's native place, to be interred with the bones of his family.

When carrying the remains to the home of the deceased, not only is the greatest care bestowed on them, but the spirit is carefully considered and led onward, to prevent the possibility, as they suppose, of its wandering off the route. Leaves are occasionally plucked, and with three or four grains of rice placed on them, are deposited by the wayside as offerings. On reaching [782] a river this is done on the bank, and sometimes when such a river is large and the abode of some powerful demon, a fowl is let loose in the jungle as an offering to the titular spirit of the stream. A most curious custom exists connected with this transporting of the soul which I have seen on several occasions. The dead, they say, have not the strength or ability to wade

* In Crawfurd's embassy to Siam, we find that a similar idea prevails in that country (see Appendix C).

9: Godwin-Austen G-3 (no date) 1872 AR7 Khasi AR7

through water, and if they trust themselves to it would be carried down the stream, never to be recovered. They, therefore, stretch a thread of cotton from one bank to the other, and if the breadth is great this is kept clear of the water by sticks planted in the bed of the river, and notched at the top to receive it. If the running water should be very narrow merely a stick is laid, or even a stalk of grass is considered sufficient to form a bridge for the dead man's soul. The line of thread is called the "string bridge." 764 775

On passing through some dense dark wood where it is presumed a demon may be, they think it not improbable that he may be detaining them or throwing impediments in the way, and should any of the party fall sick such is to them clearly indicated. The breaking of eggs is resorted to, or a pendulum is made by tying a stone, knife, or generally the brass box in which they keep the lime that is mixed with the betal and pan leaves, and the rite so well described by Hodgson (Appendix A)[1] is gone through. The similarity of the Bodo or Mech custom shows how general these superstitious customs are among the tribes in this quarter. The only difference being that with the Khasi, the weight is caused to revolve in a circle should any spirit require to be propitiated, and that it should cease to revolve when the offering, either a fowl or a pig, is considered to have been accepted. 764 782

Should a Khasia lose his life in such a way that his body cannot be recovered, say by being drowned in one of the large rivers in the plains, his relations assemble on some prominent hill or rock overlooking the low country. One of the members taking some kowries (small shells used as money, Cypræa) in his hand, and, looking towards the site of the accident, shouts out the name of the deceased and calls on him to return; his spirit having been supposed to do so, they proceed to burn the cowries, which are symbolical of his bones, and any clothes of the deceased they may possess. The ashes of the cowries are then placed in the bone depository. 766

The corpse is kept in the house four or five days, occasionally longer.* In the case of chiefs of tribes, men of consequence and wealth, the body after death is preserved in honey, and kept in this way in its coffin for a very considerable period; the platform on which the body is burnt is erected during the times, and considerable expense is entailed on its construction, in cutting the stones, as well as on the expenditure of gunpowder; throughout the day explosions may be heard at irregular intervals from different quarters, now at one side, then at another to drive away [764]

* The excessive and continuous rainfall of the Khasi Hills is not the reason why the dead are preserved in honey; it would be impossible to procure it in sufficient quantity for such a purpose. *Vide* M. Schlagintweit's paper in the "Ausland", where this is stated.

[1] [see category 116, p. 137 — Analyst]

9: Godwin-Austen G-3 (no date) 1872 AR7 Khasi AR7

health, that we may increase and prosper, that we may walk securely, that we may enjoy our possession in security, that we may carefully ameliorate our families, that we may increase in number. Do thou embrace us, do thou confide in us, do thou support us whilst we observe the rules and customs, that we may become numerous, that we may offer thee sacrifices. Come thou and receive us, receive us at thy feet, that we may spread out on the right and on the left. Come, confide in us; come, support us; come, envelope our spirits with thy power.* 782

This sacrifice is generally made by a whole Kúr or family *all related* by blood.

Appendix C.

Crawfurd's "Embassy to Siam", p. 19.—"Under ordinary circumstances so much importance is attached to the rite of burning the dead, that if the ceremony cannot be performed soon after death, either from poverty, or from the party dying at a distance, the body is first buried, and afterwards, as soon as convenient or practicable, disinterred and consigned to the funeral pile. Of persons of distinction, a few of the bones are kept, and either preserved in urns in the houses of their relations, or buried, with little pyramidal monuments over them, in the ground adjacent to the temples. Of these monuments we saw a good number: they are small and paltry, without any inscription. 764 211

Appendix D.

W. Griffith's "Journals", p. 75.—"Close to the village are the burying-places of two Singphos. These have the usual structure of the cemeteries of the tribe, the graves being covered by a high conical thatched roof. I find, from Bayfield, that they first dry their dead, preserving them in odd-shaped coffins until the drying process is completed; they then burn the body, afterwards collecting the ashes, which are finally deposited in the mounds over which the conical sheds are erected," etc., etc. 764

Appendix E.

Burning the Dead, etc.—"The practice of preserving dead bodies in honey has not arisen, as M. Schlagintweit states, from the extremely wet season experienced at Cherra. Bodies are burnt throughout the rains, as I have witnessed. Men of rank or wealth are treated in the above way, and are often kept thus preserved during the whole of the dry cold weather, and not burnt until a propitious time has been selected. The custom, no doubt, has been derived from its Eastern source."

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* Mr. Pryse remarks: "However devoid of sense or puerile the traditional and unwritten literature of the Khasis may be considered, the writer is not sure that he is able to elicit much more sense from many parts of the much talked of literature of the Vedas and Puranas of the Hindu sages," and he offers a specimen from the Sanhita.

9: Godwin-Austen G-3 (no date) 1872 AR7 Khasi AR7

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Memoranda of Size and Height of the Stones composing the Monument at Lailangkote, Khāsi Hills (from careful measurement of same).

UPRIGHT STONES OF GRANITE.

	Cubic feet.	Total, cubic feet.
No. 1=13ft. 10in. × 4ft. 0in. × 1ft. 6in.	=83·0	
3=18ft. 9in. × 3ft. 6in. × 9in.	=49·2	
10=11ft. 2in. × 4ft. 0in. × 1ft. 0in.	=44·7	
	——	176.9

UPRIGHT STONES OF SANDSTONE.

2=18ft. 6in. × 3ft. 4in. × 1ft. 8in.	=104·7
4=12ft. 6in. × 3ft. 0in. × 1ft. 8in.	= 63·8
5= 9ft. 0in. × 3ft. 0in. × 1ft. 6in.	= 40·5
6= 8ft. 3in. × 2ft. 4in. × 9in.	= 14·4
7=10ft. 9in. × 4ft. 8in. × 1ft. 2in.	= 58·6
8= 9ft. 6in. × 2ft. 9in. × 1ft. 2in.	= 30·6
9=10ft. 9in. × 2ft. 6in. × 2ft. 2in.	= 58·4
11=12ft. 5in. × 2ft. 6in. × 1ft. 6in.	= 46·7
——	417.7
——	594·6

THE LARGEST FLAT STONE OF GRANITE.

Greatest length, 30ft. 4in.; breadth, 10ft.; and mean thickness, about 1 foot: measured by co-ordinates laid off from a central line, at 2 feet apart, with the thickness at edge. Total of cubic feet in mass 329·0.

FLAT STONES ON SOUTHERN SIDE, AND THE TWO STEPS.

	Mean breadth.	Mean length.	Mean thickness.	Cubic feet.
No. 1=	6ft. 0in. ×	8ft. 4in. ×	8ft. 0in.	=33·0
2=	5ft. 8in. ×	9ft. 8in. ×	1ft. 6in.	=82·0
3=	5ft. 2in. ×	9ft. 9in. ×	1ft. 4in.	=67·0
4=	5ft. 1in ×	7ft. 2in. ×	1ft. 4in	=49·0
5=	9ft. 3in. ×	5ft. 8in. ×	1ft. 0in.	=52·0
6=	3ft. 2in. ×	5ft. 8in. ×	8in.	=12.0

295·0 cubic feet.

The specific gravity of granite being taken at 2·6, or 163 lbs., the weight of the Lailangkote granite by experiment, we have for the weight of the largest flat stone, 329 cubic feet=tons 23 : 18 : 3 : 7; for the other six, 295 cubic feet=tons 21 : 9 : 1 : 9.

DISCUSSION.

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Dr. CHARNOCK said the "Asiatic Researches" for the year 1828 contained a short paper by a Mr. Walters on the Khāsi (Cāsias). The paper in question, which related to the village of Supar-Punji, also contained drawings of certain stone monuments; among others, four large circular stones standing together. They were only a few feet

9: Godwin-Austen G-3 (no date) 1872 AR7 Khasi AR7

high, with a smooth surface, and resembled trees cut down; but it did not appear for what purpose they were used. Mr. Walters stated that the uprights and stone doors referred to in the paper were monuments to the memory of deceased rajahs and chiefs; that the upright slabs of granite were detached from the rock by means of fire; and that the dead bodies of the Khāsi are burned at an appointed place, and the ashes placed in earthen pots, which are deposited under the stones. He (Dr. Charnock) doubted the suggested derivation of the name of the tribe. If derived from the Hindústání, it could not be very ancient. The chief interest in the paper lay in the fact that the Khāsi erect these monuments at the present day.

Sir DUNCAN GIBB said there was a feature of some interest in the author's very interesting paper, and that was the statement that the stones of the megalithic remains described by him were obtained from quarries of sandstone not far distant from the place in which they were erected. Now, this point he looked upon as of considerable importance, because it so readily explained the comparative facility of transport of such huge masses of stone as entered into the construction of the monument described. In this country the most diverse opinions prevailed as to the locality whence the stones were obtained composing such monuments as are found at Stonehenge, Aylesbury, and other places, and he thought the author had added to the value of his paper by giving accurate details as to the locality whence the stone was obtained, composing the remarkable monuments so graphically illustrated; nevertheless, as a geologist, he should like to know from the author to what formation these sandstones belonged.

Col. A. LANE FOX thought the Institute might be congratulated upon the paper which they had just heard, which was one of the most important contributions to anthropology that had been received for some time past. It was impossible to overrate the value of the details of the manners and customs which Major Godwin Austin had given, and which were associated with the erection of these megalithic monuments at the present time. They might at some future time serve as links of evidence in interpreting the object of similar monuments in other times and places. The great problem before the Institute, he thought, was how far the builders of these monuments in our own time might be regarded as the representatives of those who erected them in the prehistoric period of Europe, or how far the monuments themselves might be regarded as survivals from the prehistoric age. The geographical distribution of these monuments, as he had before shown in the *Ethnological Journal*, was continuous, or nearly so, extending from those Kassias in the north-east of India to Central India, Persia, Asia Minor, the Crimea, along the north coast of Africa bordering the Mediterranean. They are found in Etruria, up the south and west coast of France into Britain, and as far as Denmark and Sweden. In so far as our present knowledge enabled us to judge, they were unknown in Russia proper, in Northern Asia, in Central and Southern Africa, and on the two continents of America, with the exception of Peru. Their continuous geographical distribu-

9: Godwin-Austen G-3 (no date) 1872 AR7 Khasi AR7

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tion extending from our own country to the country of these Kassias was in favour of the view that their erection might be a practice handed down by them from the remotest time; and this gave great additional interest to the study of the customs of the people who built them. Evidence of great antiquity of these monuments in India was wanting; most of those examined in Central India have been found to be associated with implements of iron; but it had been shewn that iron in the soil in that country would be preserved for ages, and there was no knowing how far back the use of this metal might have extended. There was one peculiar custom which in Europe, Africa, and Russia appeared to have nearly the same geographical distribution as those monuments, and which was sometimes associated with them; he alluded to the custom of placing pieces of rags upon trees at holy wells and elsewhere as a cure for diseases, and he should like to ask Major Austin whether this custom prevailed amongst these Kassias or in their neighbourhood.

Mr. HYDE CLARKE observed that Colonel Fox had just enumerated the geographical region of megalithic monuments, and this was precisely the region described in his paper on the Caucaso-Tibetans. The areas are coincident. The Khasias are seated among tribes, which have linguistic affinities with Georgian and Palæogeorgian. The present Khasias cannot, however, be considered as *in situ* in reference to the ancient migration connected with the stone monuments of the Dekkan, but are a subsequent migration. The connection of traditions between Khasias, etc., and Burmah is simply because they are obtained from a common centre in High Asia. Among the many valuable facts is that of the male and female stones, and the numbers of these are, perhaps, also male and female. The numbers three and seven signify middle. In two cases where eleven occur they are arranged as six and five. The male stones are more numerous than the female, and may have some relation to polyandrous notions. Egg divination may possibly have its metaphysical basis in the relations which exist in many languages in the form of words for eye (eage) and egg. Major Austen's testimony to the moral qualities of the hill tribes is of value. Dr. Hunter, hon. member Anthropological Institute, has pointed out in his *Rural Life in Bengal* that it is on the hill tribes we must greatly rely for the invigoration of our Indian empire.

Mr. W. C. DENDY: The great merit of this paper is that it is written by a careful observer who was an eye-witness of all which he describes; one such narrative is worth a volume of compilations. In our own region the megalith is a relic of very ancient date, the record, perhaps, of a semi-barbarous race, and all account of them is usually speculative and conjectural. In the east we learn there are kistvaens and cromlechs and dolmens of recent date, the constructors of which are yet in existence, and an inquiry into their history may elucidate by analogy some of the obscurity that has yet clouded our own megalithic monuments. Choir Gawr or Stonehenge is composed of several sorts of rock, blue stone and marble, sand and granitic: why is this variety of selection? Among Major Austen's sketches there is

9: Godwin-Austen G-3 (no date) 1872 AR7 Khasi AR7

764 211 114 one of a beautiful megalithic temple, and he alluded to male and female stones. May this variety of quality and colour in the stones be symbolical of idol or astral or planetary worship? In Asia, it seems, these relics are chiefly within a certain latitude forming a belt from Oceania to the Mediterranean, the zone, indeed, of the anthropomorphous simiæ; and we have accounts of the relics of Asiatic pigmies discovered in and around one of these cromlechs not remote from the Khasi Hills. Remembering the influence of climate on both mind and body, it might be interesting to inquire how far a superstitious psychology may be an ethnic trait among the less accomplished orientals.

Dr. A. Campbell, Mr. James Fergusson, Mr. J. W. Flower, Dr. Seemann, Mr. E. B. Tylor, Mr. Wake, and the Chairman, also took part in the discussion.

9- Godwin-Austen G-3 (no date) 1872 ART Khasi ART

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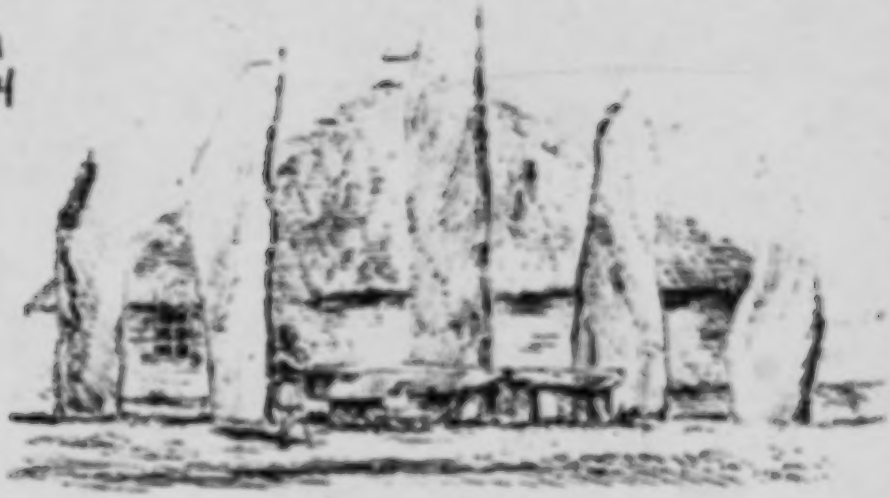


THE STONES AT MAOFLANG KHASI HILLS.

MAO-BAH'n MAO SIEIANG, BONE DEPOSIT OF CHIEFS PIONEER

[End plate 1]

years ago, previous to some of these published accounts, but contains several details not given by any of them. 211

3. The Khasi stones are of three classes, viz :— 211 764

a. The funeral pyres.

b. The kists containing the pots of ashes.

c. The monumental groups.

It is the last class (*c.*) which has, hitherto, nearly monopolised attention, and to which the published notices almost exclusively refer.

4. The Funeral Pyres.—When a rich man dies his body is generally reduced to ashes immediately, but his honorific cremation does not take place till some time, often a year, afterwards. In the interim the earthen jar containing his ashes is kept "under a stone" (in Khasi talk) *i.e.*, in a small temporary closed kist. For the honorific burning a pyre is prepared on which the ashes are burnt over again a very little, *pro formâ*, and the great funeral feast follows.

The pyre is placed just outside the village of the deceased, on a hillock or in a clear space and near the road. The modern pyres are usually square (approximately), the sides of stone (dressed or undressed according to the means of the family) about four or five feet high, the whole of the middle filled with loose stones and earth up to the level of the walls.*

A pyre was raised about four years ago just outside the village of Mausmai close by the English main road. Many hundreds of men and women carrying from ½ cwt. to 1½ cwt. on their backs pass close by this pyre daily and a considerable per centage rest a few minutes on it. Ledges are raised on two sides, but are by no means essential to a pyre; they merely add a utility. The Khasis mean the ledges to be a convenient height to rest on with a load, and each ledge satisfies this condition, but no Khasi would dream of measuring with a two-foot rule, so as to get them the same height. So the pyre itself is meant to be a square or thereabouts. All the Khasi stonework is done in this way; they do not care to make it geometrically accurate, and consequently in my opinion little valuable result could be drawn from any accurate measurement and mapping of the stone monuments.

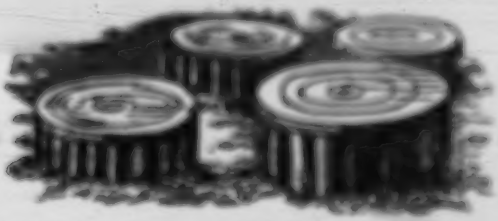
This pyre at the entrance to Mausmai is one of the most complete modern pyres. The ancient pyres were very seldom (if ever) made with hewn stones, and the Khasis state that in former times they were as often made round (*i. e.* oval) as square. Being thus originally very roughly shapen heaps of loose

* For admirable illustrations of the Khasi monuments, see "Proceedings of the Soc. Ant., Scotland," vol. i, p. 94. Fergusson's "Rude Stone Monuments," chap. xiii, and "Asiatic Researches," vol. xvii, p. 506. [Ed.] 113

10:Clarke U-3 (no date)1874 AR? Khasi AR?

211 unhewn stones, and, being used on only one occasion, they
• 764 rapidly fall into complete decay. Dr. Hooker mentions that he repeatedly remarked cones of earth, clay, and pebbles, about twelve feet high, upon the hills, which appeared to be artificial. These must have been the broken down pyres.

764 3. THE KISTS CONTAINING THE ASHES OF MEN.—These consist of a circle or square of upright stones, fitting as closely as a Khasi can conveniently make them to do, with one round or square flat stone on the top. They vary in size from a few inches diameter to six or seven feet.



The circular kists are more especially used by the people of the valleys, i. e., who inhabit villages at less than 3,000 feet above the sea; at Walong and Sohbar, which stand west and east of the main Government road as it steeply ascends from Sylhet, there are hundreds (I am not sure that there are not thousands) of kists of this type inside the villages. The Khasis of the grassy plateau, the true Nongkhlaing (i. e., people of the grass in Khasi language, the genuine representative type of the tribe) very commonly employ square kists.

One great feature of the Khasi sepulture is that the ashes of the families are collected from time to time. At first the ashes of a man are probably kept in a small kist. Then after a few years a great general family ceremony is held, and the ashes of the various individuals of the family are collected from the smaller kists. The ashes of all the men are collected into one earthen jar, the ashes of all the women are collected into another, and these two jars are placed in one larger kist, the jar

of women's ashes until the date, i. e., the last stone closes; 744
the reason of which is that in Khasi-land the women is always mistress of the house. The quantity of ashes altogether is very small.

Each occasion of collection of family ashes is accompanied by a great family feast, which is mainly of pig. No bones of pig could by any chance get inside the kist; that would be horrid.

The stones forming the kist fit so closely as a Khasi can conveniently make them; a mouse might, however, generally get in. In the midst of each earthen jar of ashes a close-fitting stone is placed so that no animal could get at the ashes within; but this, of course, does not fit by any means air-tight, and the damp of the climate affects the ashes so much that on re-opening the kists after even a few years, for the purpose of replenishing the family ashes, it frequently happens that no trace

In the descriptions of the Khasi stone monuments hitherto published, these numerous kists appear often overlooked or confounded with the horizontal monumental slab. The kists differ entirely in their object and meaning, and in being closed. So long as they contain earthen jars they cannot be mistaken; but by the continued collection of family ashes the majority of the square kists are left with one side broken down and empty, and in such a state it is sometimes impossible to determine whether the horizontal slab be a monument or the lid of an old kist, unless a family can be found to claim it as their monument. Where there are no upright monumental stones near I incline to suppose that a large majority of these doubtful remains are kists and not monuments.

6. The Monumental Slab.—There are two general types 745
of monumental stones, viz., the upright slab and the horizontal slab.

The upright slabs are commonly grouped in threes or fives (sometimes they are seven or more); they are nearly always oblong and set up in a row with the tallest stone in the

she does not have any daughter, the property will pass to the female descendants of sisters of Ka Long, as her elder sisters Ka Laimon and Ka Laiben have left no daughters. It is therefore necessary to distinguish carefully between an elder and a younger sister, and also similarly between sisters of the mother. The generation of the women of the same house and extended family requires to be noted with care.

The youngest daughter and heiress is termed the Ka Khaddah. As Cantlie remarks the "Ka Khaddah is the custodian of the family property, not the full heir in the sense known to other systems of law, but a limited heir. She is responsible for the performance of religious ceremonies.....; she cremates her mother, and if she be Ka Khaddah of the whole family, she puts the bones of all members in their final resting place under the stone (mawbah) of the clan. The expenses of this ceremony are considerable and for this reason she gets a larger share of property, or in some cases a piece of family property in addition and apart from her separate share. Members of the family who are unable to earn for themselves and have no children to earn for them have the right of being fed at the iing-Khaddah" (house of the heiress).

The management of the property is however vested in the men of the family. The ancestral property of the family of myntri U Subu Rai's mother was under the management of U Joi, in his mother's life-time; then, on the death U Joi, the next brother U Doi became manager. After U Doi, the management came to U Subu Rai. After him, the authority will pass to U Hojen, as U Sombarai is dead and then to U Nodren. Any sons of Ka Pres and other sisters will not get any precedence over U Nodren. As the senior U Kni of the Iaughiah Kur, U Subu Rai is also the manager of the common property of the Kur. This land has been leased out to various persons and the total income is divided among the different houses of the Kur. Whenever there is money to be distributed U Subu Rai calls together all the representatives of the Iaughiah houses and

13:Mukherjee E-5 (1954)1958 AR7 Khasi AR7

596 extended form more often when the children of the deceased sisters of *Ka-khadduh* reside there. This extension is on the mother's side and is affiliated through the extension of mother-child relationship.

Additional members like widower brothers or widowed sisters make the Khasi family a composite one.

In a Khasi family father, mother and her brother are very important. Father who is regard[1]as *Mynder* (stranger) or *Uakong kha* (begetter), has also the position of *Kynrad* (master) of the house (set-up by him). He is the executive head and the mother is the *dejure* owner of the household.

177 178 607 593 [428] Modern conditions and spread of Christianity have greatly affected the Khasi society and changed the Khasi ways of life but have failed to alter the traditional mode of inheritance even among the Christian Khasis. Another important fact which is apparent in the Khasi families, is the change of the status of the mother's brother (*Ukni*) in his sister's house. His influence has greatly been diminished due to clash with *Ka-Khadduh* (heiress). He has almost lost his control over his sister's [562] family. This has made the women exert their status to a danger point. Consequently, some amount of maladjustment in the relationship system, moral depravity and disintegration loom large in the family horizon.

596 613 Family is the core of Khasi social organisation and the closeness of familial kin with the members of the sub-clan is due more to the fact that sub-clan owes its development to the family. A *Shi-K'puh* (member of sub-clan) is a secondary relative and can easily be approached for any help.

614 The functions of the above mentioned social groupings are as follows :

Clan (*Ka-Kur*)—It regulates marriage. It being a larger non-residential kin group contact between its members is infrequent. The amount of social participation needed on certain level to intensify the relationship among its members falls far short of. But nevertheless, there existed among the members

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[1][Should read: regarded.—Analyst]

13:Mukherjee E-5 (1954)1958 AR7 Khasi AR7

of a clan some ceremonial attachment developed out of the custom of depositing the bones of the clansmen in clan ossuary and renewing the relationship between the clansmen on the ceremonial occasion of *thepmawbah* when the bones were finally transferred from *mawshieng* (ossuary of a sub-clan) to *mawbah* (ossuary of a clan).

Social bond among the clansmen is due to the performance of common religious ceremonies (*phur*), worship of common deities and spirits of household (*Ksuidnia*), water (*puri*) and hills (*Ksuidlum*) and observance of mouring for three days for the death of clansmen with the cessation of outdoor work specially with implements.

Economic bond among them is due further to the possession of common land (*ri-kur*), which is divided into separate holdings held by families.

Sub-clan *(Ka-k'pon)*—Unlike the clan, sub-clan has nothing to do with the regulation of marriage. Its main functions are socio-religious. Mutual interest in the welfare of the members of sub-clan evinced in the observance of *aibam** in honour of the dead grandmother, profund sentiment grown out of the former practice of depositing the bones of the dead persons of the same sub-clan in *mawshieng* and the responsibility of bearing the expenses for *thepmawbah* bind the members together.

The observance of mourning on the death of a person of the same sub-clan for three days and the consequent

*Offering of food to the spirits of the dead ancestors.

15: Nakane E-5 . (1955-1956) 1967 AR7 Khasi AR7

614 [765] [769] *mauba* (grave stone), in which the bones of all the dead members are buried. When the *mauba* becomes full, or some members move away to a considerable distance, they provide another branch *mauba*, creating a new *kur*.[1] Thus in course of time, every older *kur* occasionally branches off. Every branch *kur* has a different name, but can be grouped into a major *kur* thus forming a distinct exogamous group. Relationships among the minor *kur* of one major *kur* are usually known, or can be ascertained, so that marriages among these members are avoided. When the Khasi express this kind of group consciousness, they use the term *jai* (own people). For outsiders, it is difficult to know through the names of minor *kur* whether *kur* A and *kur* B are of the same group or not.

However, neither clan solidarity nor corporative activities are found among the Khasi, except in those clans which are considered of higher status, and maintain a functional position in the political or religious fields. Such are the Siem of the ruling clan and the Ringdoh of the priest clan, etc. Among commoners like the villagers of Sohkynduh and Kongton, the importance of a *kur* is confined to recognizing a common ancestress, with a common *mauba* conception, which requires them to maintain a strict exogamous rule. But whether of major or minor *kur*, its members do not meet together or have a common leader. Actually major *kur* of which there are a considerable number all over the Khasi Hills, have no clear-cut geographical distribution. Each is scattered over a wide area, cutting across territory which includes several villages, and mixing with various other *kur*. Indeed, some of them are very widely distributed geographically and found in almost all regions of the Khasi Hills. A minor *kur* is also scattered over many different villages, though it shows more concentration than the major one. Consequently a village may be composed of small segments [621] of more than a dozen different *kur*. Even these small segments of each *kur* found in a single village have little or no sense of kin-group solidarity, unless the members have quite close kinship ties. In many cases, though some members have the same *kur* name, their relationship may be distant, so that they cannot always reconstruct their genealogical relationship. In such a case their behaviour and attitude towards the same *kur* members and towards other *kur* members show no difference.

613 Individuals are not grouped actually under the name of *kur* but in a smaller group of matrilineal descendants from one great-grand-

[764] 1. The Khasi cremate dead bodies: bones and ashes are usually kept in a spot near the youngest sister's house which is the centre of a functional descent group, for many years and finally placed in the *mauba* of the *kur*. They say that these bones are to be collected and replaced into the *mauba* every hundred years with a great ceremony. However, none of villagers are certain about the year when the last ceremony was held.

group of matrilineal and Mon-Khmer-speaking people who claim as their ancestral homeland the present-day United Khasi–Jaintia Hills District (within approximately 90° 47′ and 92° 52′ E. and 25° 5′ and 26° 5′ N.). This group includes the Jaintias (also Pnar or Synteng) in the southeast, who differ from the Khasis primarily in their duolocal residence pattern and less virulent forms of sorcery. (The Hadem in eastern Jaintia are a Kuki people.) It also includes the Lyngngams (also spelled Lynngam) in the west, who practice migratory swidden agriculture and certain peculiar funerary rites, and are said by Ehrenfels (1955) to be culturally intermediate between Khasis and Garos. Finally, it includes Bhois, Wars, and upland Khasis, which terms are primarily territorial. Bhoi country is the north-central part of the District, and is culturally complicated by the presence of Mikirs, Lalungs, and Nepalis. War country spans the entire southern length of the District, so that Wars divide into Jaintia Wars and Khasi Wars; of these, the Khasi Wars have traditionally transmitted property to sons as well as to daughters. The upland center of the District is the country of the Khasis proper, those whose culture provides the most useful model for interpreting the variations found elsewhere. [For general reference on all categories of Khasi culture, cf. Costa 1936 and 1937; also Gurdon 1907, especially for data on regional variations.] **Geography.** The District is 5,554 square miles of hilly tableland, intricately dissected by numerous rivers, and marked by significant ecological variation over very short distances. The tablelands step gently downward north from Shillong Peak, which at 6,445 feet is the highest point in the District, and over about 55 miles ease into the Brahmaputra valley where this is some 250 feet above sea level. To the south, the land slopes more steeply downward for about 20 miles, and then drops abruptly, in cliff and steep-slope formations, to the Ganges sea-level delta that begins at its north with Sylhet. The annual southwest monsoons drop torrential rains around Cherrapunji and Mawsynram villages (for Cherrapunji, a record 805 inches in 1861), but then, reaching Shillong 33 miles to the northeast, provide only about 100 inches per year. Rainfall is again greater in Bhoi, which shares the Brahmaputra valley climate. Climate is temperate on the high Shillong plateau, where it seldom freezes and never snows. To the north, climate becomes subtropical, forest is jungly, and fauna abound. The climate to the south is also subtropical. [Cf. Hooker 1891: chap. XXIX.] **Linguistic affiliation.** Khasi is one of the major Mon-Khmer languages, related to Mon, Khmer, Semang-Sakai, Nicobarese, and Palaung-Wa. The major Khasi dialects are Khasi, Jaintia, and Lyngngam, to which Grierson adds War. Further minor variations occur from village to village. The Khasis had no script until 1842, when the roman alphabet was successfully applied to the Cherrapunji dialect of Khasi proper. [Cf. Rabel 1961; Grierson 1903-28: 2; Bareh 1962.]

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household deities, and measles and smallpox deities. Deities of the first two categories are simply aspects of the high God or Goddess. • The earth is peopled with two great orders of land demons and water demons who cause all undesirable, unnatural, and otherwise inexplicable events, acting either on their own or as instruments in the hands of sorcerers. Apart from omens, both in nature and in dreams, Khasis attach supernatural significance also to mystic numbers, and to the colors white, black, and red. They hold especially important folk beliefs regarding betel nut, paddy rice, gold and silver, and clothing. **Practitioners.** The two classes of religious practitioners are the village or state priests and the sacrificers. Both are male. They use the same divinatory techniques of reading broken eggshells and the entrails of cocks, and they both sacrifice cocks, hens, goats, pigs, and cattle. Their skills are not taught to them so much as picked up by observation and confirmed by demonstrations of efficacy. A priest is elected from among the men of his sib to direct his skills to the public good until he dies, and his rewards are institutionalized and come from the village or the state. A sacrificer acts for private persons or kin groups, on call, and is rewarded by them personally with gifts in cash or in kind. The sacrificer is called upon to explain and then to ritually remedy every variety of misfortune, especially illness, though his powers are nowadays regarded with ambivalence, and he is widely expected to become a sorcerer sooner or later. • There are two major types of sorcerer. One is the ritual specialist or sacrificer who secretly turns his skills from good to evil, manipulating demons to injure a person or kin group, and acting always for himself alone out of considerations of jealousy or revenge. The other is normally a leading citizen, a woman who is so wealthy and successful that it is believed that she must keep a *thlen*, i.e. a creature which will bring her prosperity as long as she feeds it periodically with human blood. To provide this blood, the men of her household, or other males whom she bewitches with a special whisky, will indiscriminately murder anyone except a member of her matrilineage. The Jaintias have an analogue to the *thlen* in their *taro*, except that the ultimate result is death from illness rather than murder. Minor witchcraft can be perpetrated by poison keepers or persons with an evil eye, who are often women. **Ceremonies.** The important traditional ceremonies were the life-crisis rituals relating to pregnancy and childbirth, the naming of a child, and death. Lesser ceremonies related to marriage and divorce, and to housebuilding. All these rituals were addressed primarily to the ancestors, and they are still performed in modified form by many Khasis. Other rituals, which were performed by groups such as villages, sibs, local descent groups, or households, were addressed to the unnamed aspects of the high

776 771 787 822 824 791 793 764 754 [184] 843 844 553 764 585 586 342 769 178 782

God or Goddess, deities regarded as helpful in bringing prosperity, producing fertility, and so on. Rituals of this kind are no longer practiced, except for the Bedingkhlam ceremony designed to protect the Jaintia village of Jowai. Finally, the state religion of many chiefdoms was expressed in one great ceremony per year which was intended to secure ancestral blessing for a chief and his lineage, and, through this, for the entire chiefdom. The notable example, still practiced, is the Pomblang Syiem of Khyrim chiefdom. [Cf. Lyngdoh 1937; 1946; Stegmiller 1924b; Becker 1909.] **Illness and medicine.** In time of illness, a Khasi calls in a sacrificer, and possibly also a medicine man. The medicine man is an ordinary individual who has hit upon some herbal remedy for one or more ailments, who has become famous enough to be sought out and rewarded in cash, and who jealously guards the formula of his medicine until it dies with him. He and his patients tend to regard him as specially blessed. **Soul, death, and afterlife.** The universe is comprised of a heaven, the earth, and the air between. Heaven is where the souls of deceased mortals live in eternal peace, grouped sib by sib. The earth and all nature were created by God, and everything that God created has its own individual soul. There is no other great earth deity, for it was God who created the earth. The air is inhabited by the wandering souls of those dead for whom full death rites were not performed. A Khasi's potentiality for enjoying an afterlife in heaven with his ancestors depends on his receiving proper death rites at the hands of his sib mates. First, his body is cremated by his children, notably his youngest daughter, and his bones are collected and deposited temporarily in a small stone receptacle. All work stops in the village while everyone participates in the funeral. Once every several years, an entire sib gathers to witness the transfer of the bones of recently deceased sib mates from their temporary receptacles to the great sib cairn that is in the keeping of the youngest daughter, descended from the sib ancestress through a line of youngest daughters. This final ceremony covers five days, and is elaborate and expensive, but when an individual's bones are finally resting with those of his antecedents in the cairn, it is understood that his soul is finally in heaven, "eating betel nut in the house of God."

782 [178] 796 178 [113] [975] 776 [972] 764 765

BIBLIOGRAPHY. Aitchison 1931; Bareh 1962; Becker 1909, 1924; Bhuyan 1949; C., W. 1832; Cantlie 1934; Chatterji 1953; Chattopadhyay 1941; Costa 1936, 1937, 1958, 1960; Darrah 1896; Ehrenfels 1950, 1953, 1955; Gait 1926; Gatphoh 1947; Grierson 1903-28; Gurdon 1907; Hooker 1891; India (Republic) 1952-57; Lyngdoh 1937, 1946, 1952; Mills n.d.; Morris 1910; Mukherjee et al. 1941; Pugh 1951; Rabel 1961; Rafy 1920; Ropmay 1940; Roy 1897; Roy 1914; Shakespear 1914; Singh 1950; Stegmiller 1924a, 1924b, 1925.

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18: Godwin-Austen G-3 (ca. 1872) 1875 AR7
Khasi AR7

clans were very much as we find them at the present day among the Nagas and Kukis, beyond and bordering our present extreme limits, viz. that of constant feud. They are now the quietest, most peaceful, and contented of all the hill people on the eastern frontier.

In my former paper I did not allude to the cairns in these hills, which I am inclined to think are works of greater age than the stone structures. The custom is one that certainly has long since been given up, for I could not obtain any satisfactory account of them. They are only to be seen on the northern side of the Khasi plateau, and Dr. Hooker, in his account of his trips to the Kollong Rock, did not fail to notice them. About Mairaug and towards Nougstoiu they are very numerous, and always stand on commanding situations. On the path *leading down the grassy spur to the stone monuments* previously described, near Nougshai, is a very fine large example of a cairn, about eight feet high. They are usually plain hemispherical mounds of earth; but this one is faced all round at the base with slabs of stone about four feet high; they are frequently not higher than six feet. A distant view is shown in Plate iii.

Nowhere is there any trace of the earth that forms them having been excavated close by; it must, therefore, have been carried in some short distance, to avoid unsightly hollows near the structure. I should much like to have dug into one of these cairns, but was afraid to hurt the feelings of the people by doing so. They are very probably cineraries of an earlier form to those now made of stone, and this point it might be interesting to clear up.

Beyond the Khasi area no cairns are to be found, at least I had never come across any until visiting North Munipur last winter (1872—73), where, at the head of the Imphal river, on the direct road from Sumaguting, are four fine cairns, all faced with large boulders. They are old, and the Nagas now living in the village near said they had been made by another clan of Nagas, who long ago had gone further north, and the site of whose village had been lately re-occupied by Kukis.

Mr. C. B. Clarke, in a paper read lately before your Institute, refers to the different forms of the cinerary in the Khasi Hills; but he has not quite exhausted the subject, or got further than I did, although with regard to the disposal of the ashes of the dead he gives some further interesting particulars.

As I think that drawings are of very great interest, and better exhibit the many different forms of bone depository or cinerary that have been adopted at different periods by tribes inhabiting localities very far apart, and often quite unconnected affinitively,

18: Godwin-Austen G-3 (ca. 1872) 1875 AR7
Khasi AR7

764 172 026 I give a sketch of a form of cinerary meriting attention, and not hitherto noticed (Plate iii.). Several of this form may be seen on a low spur near the Bazar of Jeddo at Shillong. The cinerary is above ground, and stands on a slightly raised platform; it consists of four thick stones, about three feet high, set on edge, and capped with a heavy top-stone; and, so far, it resembles the usual form, a figure of which is given in my first paper.* The approach to all these depositories is from the eastward by several low steps, and the whole structure is enclosed on three sides by large flat slabs (in the rough) standing on end—the largest being placed round the cinerary itself, overtopping it by three to four feet, and the remainder, thence diminishing in size, stand on either side of the steps. There are about six such monuments along the ridge of the spur, and I have seen no others similar elsewhere. They have been broken into, and the front stone removed, very probably by camp followers from our regimental bazar, which is close by. There is thus a double probability of their ultimate destruction altogether, should the station be extended in that direction.

Explanation of Plates II. and III.

211 Plate II.—View of megalithic monuments at Nongshai, near Shillong, Khasi Hills. From a photograph taken by Mr. W. Robert.

764 172 Plate III.—View of rude stone cinerary and approach, at Shillong, Khasi Hills, with cairn in the distance: by the author.

Discussion.

000 The President said that the paper of Lieut. de Crespigny, on the Milanows of Borneo, contained a great deal of extremely interesting information, especially in relation to their religious customs; the author, however, attempted to connect the Milanows with the inhabitants of Timor, through the similarity of their religious beliefs. He (the President) did not venture to express any opinion on this point, not having any grounds for forming one. He thought, however, that, as a general rule, evidence of identity of races, derived from the comparison of the religions of savages, must be received with caution, especially in the absence of any information as to physical resemblance. The attention that is devoted to religion arises from the interest that is taken in the subject, rather than from the value of the evidence it affords of connection with other peoples. There must always be a great liability to error in the accounts of the religious customs of savages. Inquiries into the resemblance of the arts of different people, about which there could be no mistake, were, he thought,

* Read May 1st, 1871.

18: Godwin-Austen G-3 (ca. 1872) 1875 AR7
Khasi AR7

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ITINERARY AT SHILLONG, KHASI HILLS.

20: Hunter G-4 (no date) 1897 AR7 Khasi AR7

175 continued through several cold seasons. The last of the Khásí chiefs
648 did not tender his submission until 1833. In February 1835 Colonel Lister was appointed Political Agent in the Khásí Hills, with his headquarters at Nongklao; and the command of the Sylhet Light Infantry battalion was also placed in his hands. The civil and military functions remained conjoined until 1854, when Mr. Hudson was deputed to Cherrá Púnjí, which had then become the administrative headquarters, with the title of Junior Assistant-Commissioner, shortly afterwards changed to the present one of Deputy-Commissioner.

The Jáintiá Hills came into British possession in 1835. In that year, as related in the Statistical Account of Sylhet District, the last Rájá of Jáintiá, Indra Singh, was deposed on the charge of complicity with certain of his tribesmen who had carried off three British subjects and barbarously immolated them at the shrine of Káli. The portion of his territory that lay in the plains was forthwith annexed to the District of Sylhet; and the Rájá voluntarily resigned the hill portion, of which we also took possession. A pension of Rs. 500 a month, or £600 a year, was granted to the deposed Rájá for life, and he resided peaceably in Sylhet until
175 his death in 1861. When we first assumed the administration of
648 the Hills, no change was made in the indigenous revenue system,
651 which consisted simply of the payment of a he-goat once a year from each village. The Rájá had derived the greater portion of his income from his possessions in the plains. In 1860, however, a house tax was imposed, the highest limit of which was one rupee (2s.) per house. This measure of direct taxation was very obnoxious to the Syntengs. They formed irregular gatherings, at which they resolved to resist payment, or at least to refuse to pay except through their own hereditary Rájá, who was then alive. An outbreak took place in the early part of the year, but it was promptly suppressed; the people were disarmed, and matters went on much as usual. But the disarmament was imperfect, and it soon became evident that the Syntengs were profoundly disaffected to our rule. Towards the close of 1860 new taxation was introduced, in the form of judicial stamps; and the elaborate schedules of the new income tax were thrust into the hands of persons, few of whom could read the language in which they were framed. Imposts also were
175 introduced upon fisheries and the right to cut timber. Con-
• 764 siderable feeling had been excited by a sanitary prohibition against
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20: Hunter G-4 (no date) 1897 AR7 Khasi AR7

burning the dead in the immediate neighbourhood of the village of Jowái. Suspicions of insurrection arose during the months of October and November 1861. In the beginning of January 1862 alarming reports were received from various quarters, and the first serious outbreak occurred on the 17th of that month. This was occasioned by the interference of a *dárogá*, or native police official, with a religious ceremony that took place at the village of Jalong. In such ceremonies dancing with arms is held essential; and the *dárogá* took upon himself to disarm the dancers. This was the signal for a general rising. The *thánd* or police station at Jowái was burned to the ground; the garrison of sepoys was besieged, and all show of British authority was swept away throughout the Hills. The Syntengs fought bravely for their independence, and at first were successful in cutting off several small detachments of police and sepoys. Their weapons were bows and arrows. In common with the other hill tribes of the North-East Frontier, their chief defence consisted in a series of strong stockades, one behind another; and the paths leading to their villages were thickly planted with *pánjis*, or little bamboo spikes, stuck in the ground like caltrops. The battalion of sepoys stationed in the Hills was rendered inefficient by sickness. At last it was found necessary to move a regular army, including an elephant battery and two regiments of Sikhs, into the country in order to quell the revolt. Colonel Dunsford was in chief command. He was accompanied by Major Haughton, the Governor-General's Agent on the North-East Frontier, and Captain Morton, the Deputy-Commissioner of the Khási and Jáintiá Hills, who acted in a political capacity. The operations were tedious and harassing. The rebel chiefs were captured one by one, and the District was declared to be finally pacified in March 1863, after the rebellion had lasted for fifteen months. The special Commission appointed under Act xi. of 1857, for the trial of offenders in the Jáintiá Hills, was dissolved in December 1863. The causes of the rebellion were thus summed up by Major Haughton in an official despatch to the Government of Bengal:—

'Taxation was introduced without the supervision with which such a measure should have been accompanied. It was followed up by fresh taxation and rumours of other taxes, also by fiscal and other innovations, which tended to disturb the minds of the people, without any counterpoise such as might have resulted from the continued presence of a European officer.' The Syntengs, like the

20: Hunter G-4 (no date) 1897 AR7 Khasi AR7

593 wedlock goes to the wife and becomes her property; but all other
428 property is inalienable, and revers to his family, as also does his corpse after death.

771 'RELIGION.—The religion of the Khásiás is demon-worship, or a jumble of enchantments muttered by priests who are sorcerers. They invoke evil spirits as the deputies of God and the instruments
775 of His pleasure or displeasure. The Khásiás believe in metempsychosis, or the transmigration of souls. After death, human beings are transformed into monkeys, crabs, tortoises, frogs, etc. Though a future state is not denied, it is treated with absolute indifference, as beyond the sphere of responsibility; all rites, ceremonies, and observances bear reference to the welfare of mankind in this world. The spirits of their departed relatives and ancestors are invoked only in so far as they are considered to influence and have power
764 over the present life. The Khásiás burn their dead, and collect the ashes into urns, which are kept under a slab raised on four others enclosing a space. These monuments are of various kinds and sizes —one for individuals, another for a family, and another for a whole
614 clan. There is no caste system, but each clan is called after some object of nature, as the Oak clan, the Crab clan, etc., and these names entail certain restrictions beyond which intermarriage is
771 forbidden. The Khási religion may be briefly described as the practice of forms to cure diseases, and to avert misfortunes of all kinds, by means of ascertaining the name of the demon who is the author of the evil, and the kind of sacrifice necessary to appease it.

797 'CHRISTIANITY.—The Welsh Mission has been labouring amongst the Khásiás and Syntengs for thirty-two years. The Christians number about 1000 [according to the Census of 1872, the total number of native converts in the District is only 85]. There are four central stations—Cherrá, Shellá, Shillong, and Jowái —and twenty-three churches. Translations of the whole of the New Testament, and a portion of the Old, are now (1876) going to press, besides other religious books.

197 'LANGUAGE.—The definitions generally given of monosyllabic
193 languages are far from adequate to enable us to assign to the Khási tongue its position amongst the Indo-Chinese family of speech. Still, in the absence of a better terminology, it may be described as monosyllabic in the agglutinative stage. The monosyllabic element greatly predominates. By far the larger number of the compounds are mere agglutinations (in a modified